FEBRUARY 2026

DENMARK

PLAYBOY

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The Fierce

VIVIANE FERREIRA

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PLAYBOY

Pretty in Pink:

The Greatest Gifts Given to Prize-Winning Playmates

WRITTEN BY
TORI LYNN ADAMS

PHOTOS BY
THE PLAYBOY ARCHIVES

BY **IMAN SULTAN**

PHOTOS BY **RMV/SHUTTERSTOCK**

Longtime PLAYBOY fans and devoted readers likely recognize the soft-blush tones pictured above. The petal-perfect hue, dubbed "Playmate Pink," was announced in the magazine in February 1965—"a striking new color shade conceived by Playboy"—in a pictorial featuring 1964 Playmate of the Year Donna Michelle. The cotton-candy color became a tradition in PMOY pictorials that lasted into the 1970s. But how did the practice of crowning a PMOY begin in the first place?

For years after its founding in 1953, the magazine editors received letters from eager readers expressing their favorite Playmates. In 1956, Michigan State undergrads wrote to declare they had named June Playmate Gloria Walker their Playmate of the Year, in addition to the standard title of Playmate of the Month. PLAYBOY recognized a good idea when it heard one, and soon decided to bestow the Playmate of the Year title upon one lucky winner each year. Choosing from 12 exceptional Playmates proved challenging, and reader feedback was key. December 1959 Playmate Ellen Stratton was named the first official Playmate of the Year in 1960. (Unofficially, Playboy gave the title to Lisa Winters in 1957 and Joyce Nizzari in 1959.)

From a scuba suit to a blonde wig, a look back at some of the most fascinating Playmate of the Year presents—plus a quick history of Playmate Pink

To further honor the PMOYs, Playboy put together gift packages with items such as luggage sets, stereos, cars, clothing and novelty items—many of which came in Playmate Pink, naturally. Are you wondering what to give the queen in your life? Explore these photos of early PMOYs and their prizes for inspiration. (And, when in doubt, head to the Playboy Shop for your own Playboy gear!)

"If anyone had told me I'd be wearing mink by my 20th birthday, I'd have sworn they were ribbing me," said Jo Collins of her white mink cape by Alper Furs. Collins was favored by PLAYBOY readers, who chose her as their favorite 1964 Playmate, and Vietnam soldiers, who requested that Playboy send her to pay them a visit during the war. Collins's prizes, worth more than $10,000 at the time, included a gallon bottle of Kahlua, which she puts into perspective here.

The Dodge Charger fastback Allison Parks received as part of her Playmate of the Year gift package was the perfect means of transportation to speed to the local airway, where she was training for her private pilot's license. In addition to her affinity for aviation, Parks also loved spending time in the pool and garden. Her new toolkit was perfect for her active lifestyle, while the Lilly Daché wig from Donna Elaine may have proved useful in her acting endeavors. Parks was also a regular on Playboy After Dark, Hugh Hefner's variety show.

Jo Collins, 1965 Playmate of the Year

Allison Parks, 1966 Playmate of the Year

Lisa Baker shows off two water looks here: a stylish swimwear set complete with Renauld of France sunglasses and a scuba diving getup featuring a Swimaster tank from W.J. Voit and other gear from U.S. Divers. Baker's most tantalizing Playmate gift, though, was a record contract audition from Monument. The music lover, who counted Count Basie among her favorites, was discovered by photographer Bill Figge at a wedding. She went on to become the November 1966 Playmate—and Figge's personal secretary.

Lisa Baker, 1967 Playmate of the Year

Baker's scuba gear would certainly come in handy for Connie Kreski, an outdoors lover. When Kreski traveled to London after becoming a Playmate, she not only landed herself a role in a major movie (she met actor and director Anthony Newley in an elevator at the London Playboy Club), but also spent time shopping the latest styles. "The Mod shops in Knightsbridge sell the wildest outfits I've ever seen," she told PLAYBOY at the time. Here, the free thinker and passionate Playmate rocks some equally far-out fashions, featuring the Walter Holmes Vibration collection and gloves from Aris.

Connie Kreski, 1969 Playmate of the Year

Between working as a model and actress and traveling the world for Playboy promotion opportunities, Claudia Jennings had quite a full plate. That's why she prioritized rest and relaxation. "You've got to sit down and relax sometimes, since the future will be unpredictable even if you work 24 hours a day," she told PLAYBOY. We think these cassettes probably did the trick. Or, if she felt so moved, the master communicator may have enjoyed typing on this Smith Corona Electra 210 typewriter—a skill she put to good use while working as a receptionist at Playboy before becoming a Playmate.

Claudia Jennings, 1970 Playmate of the Year

Sharon Clark keeps an eye on the time with her new Lady Hamilton 14-karat gold-and-diamond watch. Traveling—Clark went all the way to Micronesia for her Playmate pictorial—and being active were among her favorite ways to spend time, but the sunny Playmate also hoped to get into acting. Included in her many gifts were a Yamaha Mini-Enduro and a ruby-eyed gold Rabbit pin by Maria Vogt.

Sharon Clark, 1971 Playmate of the Year

"I've always liked being in the spotlight," said Playmate Cyndi Wood. Raised by an actress and recording-company executive, Wood gravitated to the arts. Not only did it land her a spot as Playboy's February 1973 Playmate, but it also got her quite a few dancing, modeling, singing and acting gigs, including a memorable role in Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now. The above Schwinn Super Sport 10-speed bike and four-piece set of Samsonite luggage (in Playmate Pink) are just a glimpse of the grand gifts Wood received in her Playmate of the Year package.

Cyndi Wood, 1974 Playmate of the Year

Gloria Trevi

on her way to BMO

Photography by René Garcia | @renegarciaphoto_
Production / PR Burgerrock Media | @burgerrockmedia
HMUA Antonio Von Marrok | @antoniovonmarrok
Rep @prensadanna @prensa_danna

"Me Dejé Llevar": Gloria Trevi at Her Most Powerful

Gloria Trevi isn't making a comeback. She is standing firmly in her power. With four nominations at **Premio Lo Nuestro 2026**, an album that has surpassed **25 million streams** on Spotify, and a tour that continues to strengthen her visceral connection with audiences, the Mexican icon is experiencing one of the most powerful and self-aware moments of her career. She is not defined by novelty, nor by nostalgia. Gloria Trevi exists fully in the present, anchored by artistic authority, emotional depth, and an unwavering sense of purpose.

"It's a very strong and interesting moment," she shares. *"I feel the beautiful power of being on stage, of sending messages, lifting hearts, giving hope. That's my responsibility"* El Vuelo is more than an album. It is a statement of transformation. At its core is the symbol of the phoenix, a representation of rebirth, freedom, and resilience. From the album artwork, where Trevi appears as an astronaut arriving in a new universe, to its sonic range that moves seamlessly between urban rhythms, pop melodies, and deeply emotional moments, the project reflects evolution and empowerment.

"My flag is a phoenix," she says. *"It's an album that has everything. I'm happy with the result, with the feedback, and deeply grateful."* Beyond streaming numbers and accolades, what matters most to her is the audience's response. Seeing how different songs become refuge or reflection for listeners confirms that the message has reached its destination. One of the defining moments of this chapter will be Gloria's performance of *"Un Abrazo"* at Premio Lo Nuestro. It is a bold artistic choice that embraces vulnerability within a traditionally celebratory awards show. *"It's a very intimate song, written for someone who is no longer here,"* she explains. *"It's a universal feeling. Remembering those who have left us, while also becoming aware that we're still here, of what we still have."*

Her latest single, *"Me Dejé Llevar,"* holds a deeply personal place within El Vuelo. Written by **Marcelo de la Garza** and **Lalo Bladimires**, the ballad resonated with Gloria from the very first listen. *"I really identified with it,"* she says with a laugh. *"Who hasn't called someone, and when they answer, you can't speak and end up hanging up?"* The song took her back to childhood, to nostalgia, to love. *"It's a song where everyone can see themselves reflected."* The accompanying music video, filmed in natural settings throughout Miami, deepens that emotional pull. A garden labyrinth, flowing silk, an enchanted forest act as visual metaphors for emotional disorientation. *"It's like when you dream, you're running but not moving forward,"* she explains. *"I wanted to capture that magic and the feeling of being lost inside an emotion."*

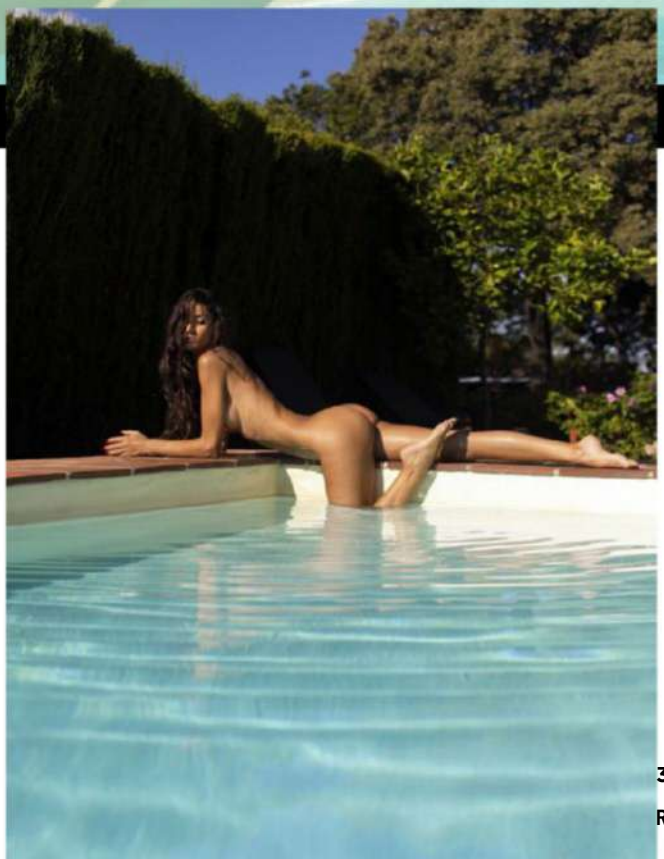
Currently touring Mexico with her Fiesta Tour, Gloria has surprised audiences with the show's intensity and pace. With more than 30 songs per night, the focus is on sustained energy
rather than extended pauses. *"It's a really beautiful tour,"* she says. *"At first, people were surprised because I don't talk much between songs, but it's because the show flows like water,"*
she laughs. *"There are so many songs, and the energy never stops. I'm very happy with this tour."*
Just two concerts away from becoming the woman with 50 performances at the Auditorio Nacional, Trevi approaches the milestone with deep gratitude. *"Every concert feels like the first and the last."* That emotion will reach a new peak on February 28, 2026, when she celebrates her birthday with a special performance at BMO Stadium in Los Angeles. In a complex global moment, her message is clear. Unity, love, and humanity. *"We have a responsibility as artists and as voices,"* she says. *"To lift the energy, to feel proudly Latino, to come together through love. There will be everything. Nostalgia, emotion, and most importantly, a huge celebration."*
If this interview were preserved for the future, Gloria knows exactly what she would want people to remember 20 years from now. *"That I would give my life for you. That giving up is never an*
option, because everyone is watching us." That tireless, vulnerable, and powerful spirit continues to guide her path. And by all accounts, **Gloria Trevi** still has plenty of sky left to claim.

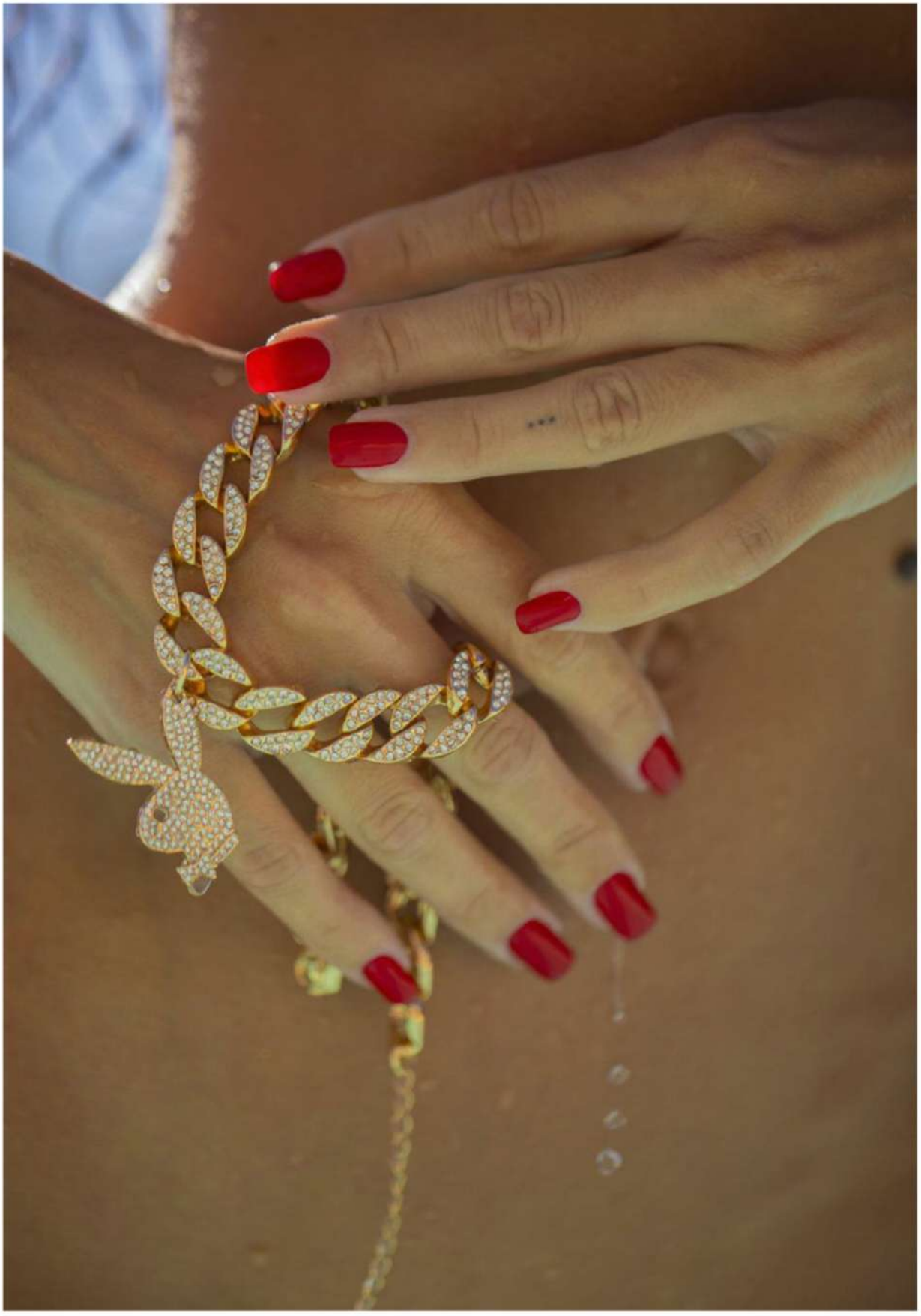
ASPIRE

WITH **ZURINE ASPIUNZA | @ZURI.AS**

“I love ad-
ventures,
with a bit
of healthy
madness.”

Instagram: @zuri.as
Birth: 03/10/1993
Height: 1,80m
Weight: 56kg
Eyes: Honey green
Nationality: Spanish
Country you live: Spain
Occupation: Professional model and Esthetician
Favorite movie: Coyote Ugly
Favorite music: Country
Favorite book: "The monk who sold his Ferrari" (Robin S. Sharma)





Describe yourself. Tell us a little about yourself and your personality... I am a bold, strong and independent person. I love adventures, with a bit of healthy madness. I am extremely passionate about defending my values and in my personal life. Sensual and very simple.

How was the shoot with Ana Dias? The session with Ana was incredible, both professionally and personally, she is a very attentive and fun person, who takes special care of her models; I would repeat it a thousand times more.

What are your career ambitions? I would like to continue traveling and working as a model, but my dream is to be able to create my own brand of lingerie.

Describe your hobbies, interests or special skills... I adore surfing and all outdoor sports, especially those related to the sea.

What makes you happy? The little things that I can enjoy every day make me happy, being with my family, friends or alone.

Who is your celebrity crush? Channing Tatum is my "ideal man". He seems to me a very funny, sexy and morbid boy, apart from his dances that I could spend hours watching.

What do you love most about your body? I love my long legs and my ass.

How do you feel about posing nude? I love showing myself as I am, I feel comfortable posing naked, I love my body with all my flaws, I feel free and fulfilled when I do it.

What is at the top of your bucket list? To go around the world.

What is the craziest thing you have done? Traveling alone to the Mauritius Islands, a 12h trip to visit a friend, I made friends with the crew and landed from the cockpit (you have to have friends even in hell).

What's your guiltiest pleasure? My greatest pleasure is chocolate, sex, traveling and living life.

When do you feel sexiest? When I feel confident when I put on high heels, I let my hair down and I am myself.

20 Q

Nick Kroll

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PETER YANG**

No one creates more bizarre characters. Now the real Nick Kroll explains how he does it

BY **ERIC SPITZNAGEL**

Q1: *On Comedy Central's Kroll Show you've created a vast universe of characters, including Fabrice Fabrice, Bobby Bottleservice and Aspen Bruckheimer. Do they just pop magically into your brain, or is it an arduous process involving math equations and dry-erase boards?* It's a combination of things. Usually a voice will pop into my head. Sometimes I'll start playing around with it in the writers' room, doing the voice and seeing if it lands. When I lived in New York I got a lot of inspiration on the subway. It was great for research. It's tough in L.A. because it's a solitary existence. You end up having to do a lot of research on YouTube.

Q2: *Which of your characters are you most likely to slip into during sex?* I developed Bobby Bottleservice by talking to girls—my friends mostly—and pretending to hit on them. Their responses were a combination of "Ugh" and "Oh, that's funny, because that's the kind of douchebag who hits on me all the time." But there was also a weird part of them that liked it—that liked a guy who's passionate and loves women, even though he's, you know, kind of a juice monster. [laughs] Bobby, in the right context, isn't a bad one to channel. He's young and wild and full of life and passion. You could do worse.

Q3: *Making people laugh is part of your job. Do you lose your sense of humor when you're not at work?* Sometimes I have trouble watching comedy on TV or whatever, because I'm so accustomed to looking at the mathematics of how comedy works. I think if you talk to a lot of comedians, if you ask them what shows they watch, most of them will tell you they can watch only dramas. It's just not relaxing to watch a comedy. It's relaxing to watch a football game or House of Cards. You need that release.

Q4: *What's your release? Is there a certain genre of entertainment that lets you unwind?* Honestly, my release is flipping through channels. At the moment I'm binge-watching The Wire. [laughs] That's right, I'm on the cultural forefront—from 10 years ago. I also like watching football. I like playoff sports, generally. I like it when there are real stakes. I'm not interested in watching a midseason baseball game, but I'll watch just about any playoff game in just about any sport.

Q5: *You're on an FX show called The League, about a bunch of friends in a fantasy football league. Prior to joining the show, had you ever been involved in a fantasy sport?* Not at all. But the entire cast of The League is in a fantasy league together, which is kind of awesome. I'm not having the best season thus far, but historically I'm one of the top guys in our league. I'm a tinkerer, a drunk tinkerer. I'll come home late at night and fuss with the lineup. On the show we call it "tinker stinker time," which is the morning bathroom time on Sunday before a game—you know, your morning dump—your last opportunity to tinker with your lineup and really make it happen. I'm a master of the tinker stinker.

Q6: *A few years ago Ken Marino, who was guest starring on The League, allegedly got arrested after punching you on the set. "I had my reasons," he tweeted. Let's assume for a moment it actually happened and wasn't a big joke. What's your side of the story?* Ken Marino is a bully. [laughs] No, actually, I'm fascinated that people took any of that seriously. What happened was, Ken came into the trailer and was like, "Hey, I just tweeted that I punched you." And I responded by tweeting a Martin Luther King Jr. quote—something like, "I have decided to stick with love." And people thought the whole thing was real. I couldn't believe it. It was so bizarre to me. Then people were mad when they found out it was just a joke, because I guess they felt lied to or something. It was the weirdest thing I've ever been involved in.

Q7: *We should also discuss the Bono incident. After the U2 frontman kissed your girlfriend, Amy Poehler, at the 2014 Golden Globe Awards, you tweeted later, "Hey, Bono, watch your back." Is there still bad blood between you guys?* I am conflict averse, but I have my limits. My thing with Bono isn't just about what happened at the Globes. We have a long-standing conflict. It goes way, way into the past. It's just…. [sighs deeply] This is still really painful to talk about. I was supposed to be the Edge, but Bono fired me because I don't know how to play guitar. Just like that—boom!—I'm out of U2. I have not forgiven Bono since.

Q8: *Does it upset you when you and Amy go to Mexico and the tabloids publish your vacation photos, but all they talk about is her bikini and don't once mention your beach body?* It's a total bummer. It's a bummer that anyone would want to see a picture of me on vacation. Like, where are we as a society that it's considered news that I went on vacation? Doesn't the world have bigger issues to deal with than looking at photos of me in short-shorts and a weird camo hat?

Q9: *You once bragged that your career has*

been "about as easy a ride as you could have." What's your secret? I think it helps that I grew up financially comfortable. A lot of artists throughout history came from the leisure class. They had the time to ponder things, to think about things. They didn't have to spend every waking moment worrying about where rent was coming from or finding a shitty job they didn't want because they needed the money to survive. Many, many artists grew up with nothing and had something deep inside that they wanted to express. But it makes a big difference if you don't have those financial burdens and can decide, without worrying about bills, if you want to tell dick jokes professionally.

Q10: *Were you a funny kid?* I thought I was, but I don't think my family would agree. When I was a kid, if you'd asked them, "Do you think Nick could be a professional comedian or actor?" I'm pretty sure they would have said, "He's a sweet kid, but let's be honest…." When I decided I was going into comedy, I would describe their reaction as skeptically supportive.

Q11: *Were you telling original jokes or just imitating what you saw on TV?* Me and my friend Andrew Goldberg—who now writes for Family Guy—were best buddies in elementary school, and we'd re-create "Wayne's World" sketches. I think a lot of comedians start out that way, just reenacting their favorite Saturday Night Live bits or their favorite scenes from Trading Places or whatever. But to me as a kid, it never felt like it was leading somewhere. I never thought, I'm going to be a comedian when I grow up. I never thought too far into the future. I guess that goes back to growing up comfortably—I had that leisure to relax and not think about what I was going to do with my life or how I was going to do it.

Q12: *Your first time on a big stage was as a freshman in college, during a stand-up competition. You lost. What happened?* I had never done comedy before, but I had this idea that I would get on stage and say, "God, I thought I was going to be so nervous, but I'm actually totally relaxed," and then pee my pants. I'd have a water balloon in my pants and pop it with a pin during my set, and it would look like I'd peed myself. But I forgot to bring the water balloon, so I grabbed a sandwich bag or something and filled it with water. But it didn't work out like I'd hoped. When I tried to jab it, it didn't burst, and I kept trying, which ended up looking like I was furiously masturbating on stage. And then I spent the next five or 10 minutes explaining what I'd tried to do unsuccessfully. It did not go well.

Q13: *Your father was a private investigator. Was that as cool as it sounds?* From a very early age I would say, "My dad is a private investigator, but he doesn't carry a gun and he doesn't wear a trench coat." He was working on a corporate level. I guess some of it was a little dangerous. The Kuwaiti government hired him to find Saddam Hussein's money, and the Filipino government hired him to find Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos's money. During the Hussein thing we had a cop outside our house for a while, and I guess that was cool. It felt more cool than scary.

Q14: *You never wanted to follow in your dad's footsteps?* Not really. Obviously I went into a different field, but I learned a lot from him, especially the way he treats people. Anyone from heads of state to kids I played with in Little League baseball, he was kind to all of them. He treated everybody the same. You can go a long way in this world by just being a decent person.

Q15: *You went to school on a farm in Vermont. That sounds almost ridiculously idyllic. Were you milking cows more than reading books?* Well, if you want to get specific, there were no dairy cows. They were beef cows, so I didn't have a lot of contact with them. You don't befriend animals that are heading to slaughter. Otherwise it was an amazing experience. It's this place called the Mountain School in Vermont, and that's really where I got my first bug for performing. It was a bunch of smart, individualistic kids who were okay being weird. In high school it can be scary to be weird. But going up there and meeting all these eccentric kids, I was like, Oh, it's okay to dress up in an orange jumpsuit and lip-synch James Brown songs while wearing kitchen clogs. It was a watershed for me. I was given permission to be a weirdo.

" I have trouble watching comedy on TV. It's just not relaxing."

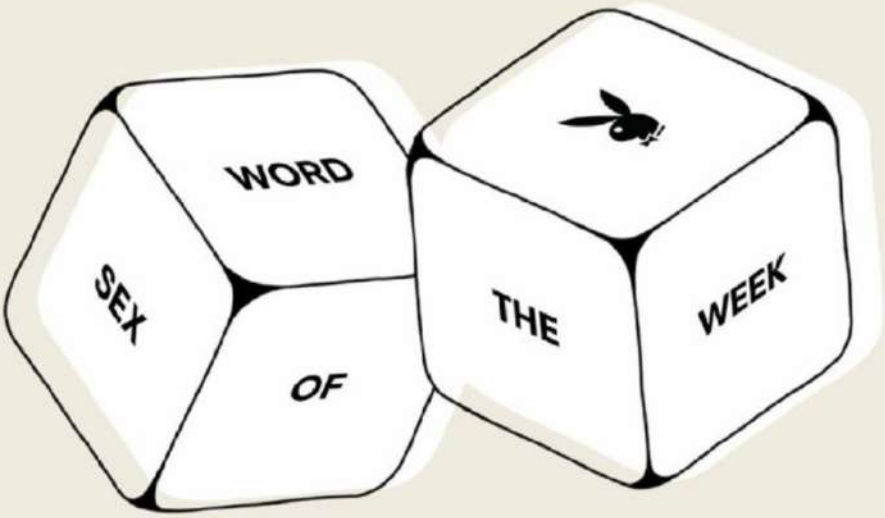
Q16: *One of your first big TV roles was on the 2007 ABC sitcom Cavemen, based on a Geico commercial. At the time, you were probably just happy to be working. In hindsight, do you wish you could expunge it from your permanent record?* I still think back on it fondly. I'd never had a TV show before. Just being able to act for a living was such an amazing opportunity, even though I was hidden under about a foot of silicone makeup. It took four hours every morning to get the makeup on and an hour to get it off. If I got that job today, I'd be like, "Holy shit. Are you kidding me with this?" But because I didn't have anything to reference it against, I was like, Oh, great. I guess this is what being on a TV show is like. You're covered in silicone with hair glued to your body.

Q17: *Have you ever met a comedy idol who turned out to be a jackass?* That almost never happens. Usually it's just about me being star struck. I had a small thing with Chevy Chase when I was on Community. He wasn't a huge fan of anyone besides him getting a laugh. But even then I was like, Oh shit, I'm threatening to Fletch? That's not too bad. Sometimes it doesn't matter if the people you love and respect aren't as cool as you want them to be. Whether Chevy Chase and I are best friends is irrelevant, and it pales in comparison to how he inspired me in Fletch or those Vacation movies or on SNL. I don't need him to like me.

Q18: *What's your 10-year plan? Are you fine with being a comic until the bitter end, or do you want to make the leap to drama?* I'd love to be able to do more dramatic stuff. There's so much good drama happening on TV right now, like True Detective, which I think is just amazing. I've got such a dark, dark side that I haven't been able to show yet. But I don't know; maybe it wouldn't be worth it. Doing a show like True Detective might be too much of a bummer. Dealing with dead people every day? That's a tough one.

Q19: *Do comedians have groupies?* Sure. I'm pretty sure that's the whole reason anybody becomes an artist. Whether it's music or comedy or filmmaking, it's all done in the hope that random strangers will want to sleep with you. When I got to the point in my career that women might actually have wanted to sleep with me because of whatever fame they thought I had, I wasn't interested anymore. I was like, Do I actually want to be with somebody who's just into me because I'm on television? But the biggest reason to say no to a groupie is that you've done two shows and are exhausted and want to go back to the hotel and sleep because you're leaving early in the morning.

Q20: *When you do stand-up, are you annoyed if people in the audience yell out requests?* I just let them get it out of their system. I'm like, "Everybody, let's all scream things that we want and think we like. Let it all out. Let the poison out." I let them have that moment, and then they tend to settle down. If that doesn't work, there's a thing I learned from Aziz Ansari, who I think learned it from Louis C.K. Once you finish your set, you come out for an encore and it's all about answering questions or taking requests. Some people really want to hear certain jokes. They want to hear it live like they heard it on an album or a special or a TV show.



Vanilla

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

ILLUSTRATION BY
KATIE BAILIE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

vanilla (***adj***) a term used to describe any form of sexual intercourse that meets the conventional standards set by society

Rachel and Taylor put away the tools and toys and decided to go for some cozy vanilla sex since they hadn't done missionary in a long time.

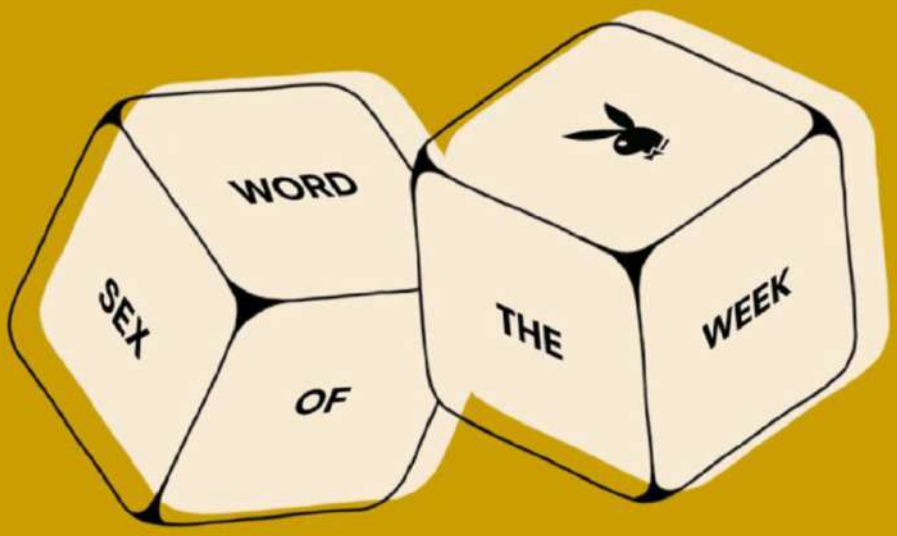
There is no incorrect way to enjoy sex. Any consensual encounter that brings pleasure and connection is worthwhile. That said, vanilla sex, or sex that can be regular ol' missionary with the lights turned off, has been unfairly maligned in our sexual landscape. The definition of vanilla is subjective, but it's generally characterized as traditional, simple, non-acrobatic sex—no handcuffs, swings, rubber suits or extra people.

Vanilla is typically hurled as an insult to indicate someone is basic in bed. In actuality, there is nothing wrong with the vanilla label. The term grew out of the BDSM community to differentiate sex that happened outside of the kink world. It was meant to be a harmless descriptor with no shade behind it. As the label went mainstream, however, it picked up a negative connotation. Combine that with the ubiquity of hardcore porn and franchises like Fifty Shades, and vanilla folks begin to feel like their sex lives are missing something.

It can be assumed a significant chunk of the population likes vanilla sex—thus the name—so if you're a vanilla sex–haver, you're in good company!

Although sexual experimentation can teach you new things about yourself and your partner, there are advantages to conventional exploits as well. For some, vanilla sex can feel more romantic and emotionally comforting.

The big takeaway is not to compare your sex life to the sex lives of others. Sex is a wide-open, choose-your-own-adventure book, and there are no rules for how to get off.



Mukbang

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

ILLUSTRATION BY
KATIE BAILIE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

mukbang (***n***) a live broadcast during which the host eats copious amounts of food while interacting with an online audience

Lee made roughly $6,000 a month doing her spicy ramen mukbang on Twitch.

In honor of Thanksgiving tomorrow, we wanted to do a food-focused fetish for this week's sex word. Since we already did feederism, we decided to discuss the pleasure of mukbanging instead. For those of you not familiar with the internet fad, mukbang is inhaling huge amounts of food on a live broadcast platform such as Twitch or YouTube. Mukbang, a portmanteau of the Korean words muk-ja ("let's eat") and bang-song ("broadcast"), started growing in popularity as early as 2010.

If you tune in to a video, you'll likely see someone sitting at a table with a ridiculous smorgasbord and then ravenously consuming everything before them. A mukbang dish can literally be anything: Giant-sized bowls of noodles are a popular choice, as are dumplings, fried chicken, barbecue, shellfish and fast food.

Why do people enjoy watching this? The reasons vary. For some who might be lonely and lacking social interaction, mukbang imitates the feeling of communal dining. For others, yes, duh, of course it's a sex thing. ASMR, which is basically arousal at specific auditory or visual stimuli, can be trigged by mukbang videos. Although mukbang is not inherently sexual, the loud slurping, exaggerated exhaling and reddened faces can all be turn-ons if your brain is wired a certain way. People will pay good money just for the privilege of watching an attractive person binge-eat their way through a plate of atomic wings.

So when you're chowing down on Turkey Day, remember that the bird could potentially be paying for itself if you just hit record.

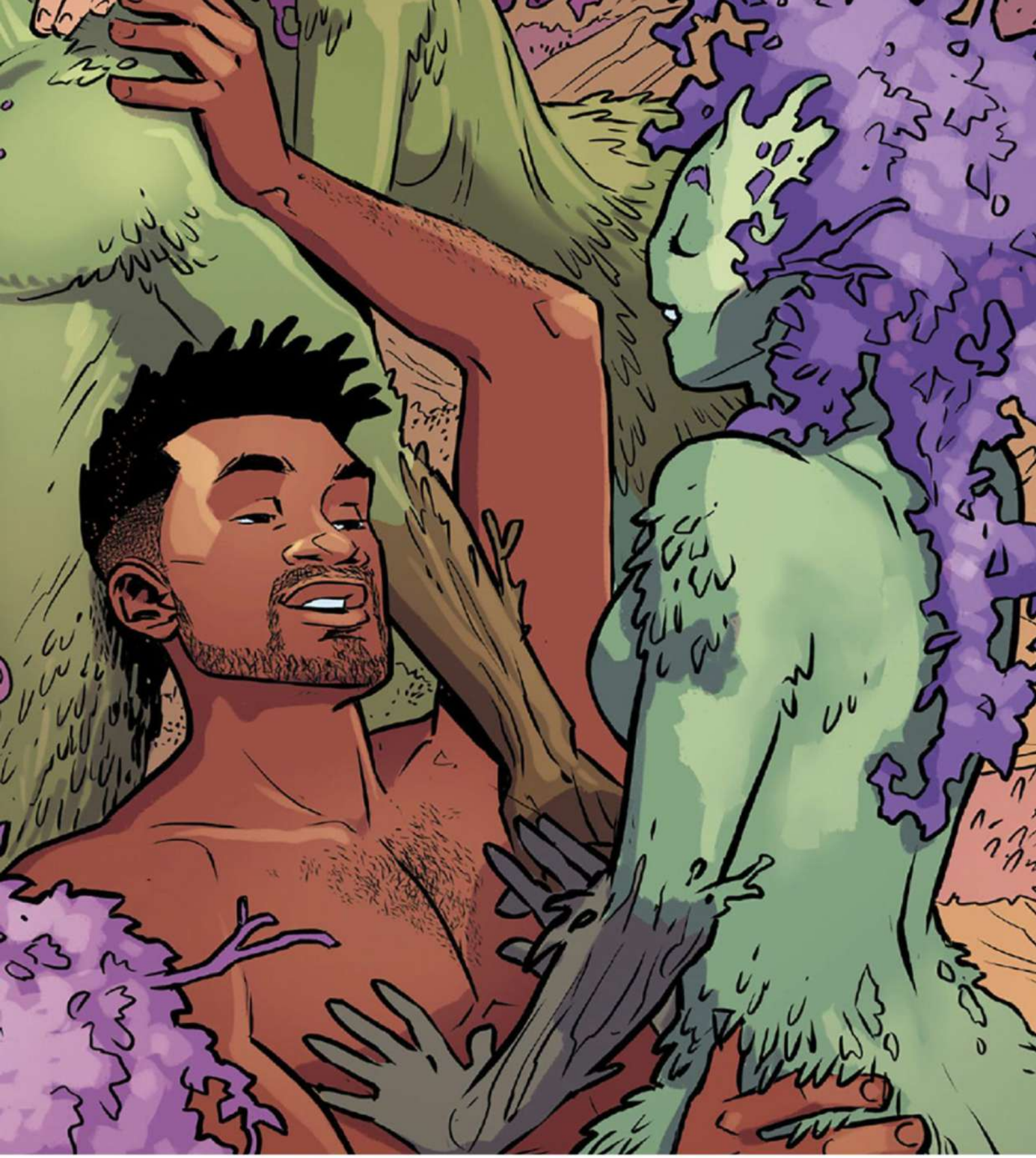
Money Shot: Pleasure Planet

The triple-X space sex-plorers are at it again in this exclusive tale for Playboy

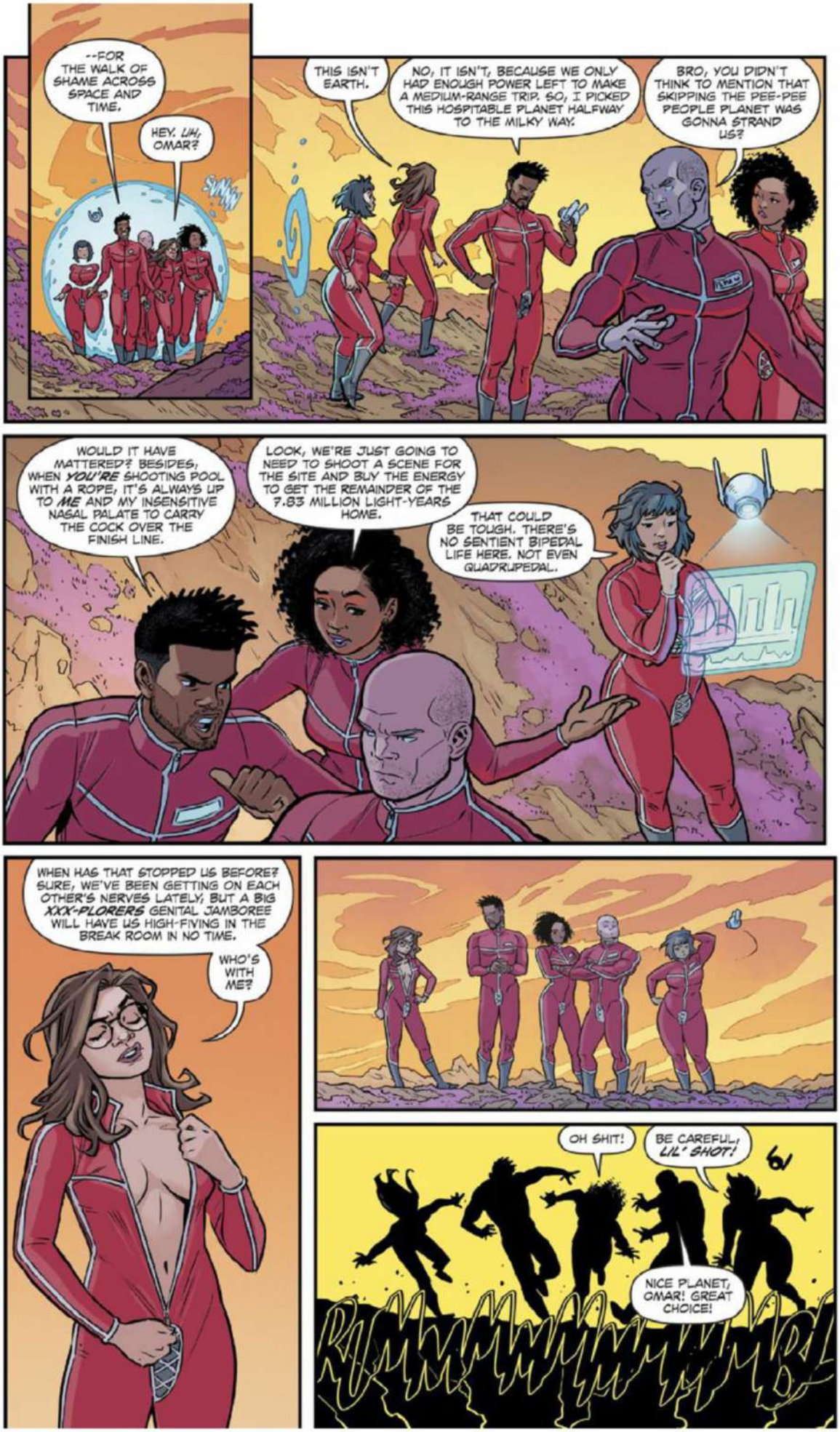
BY
TIM SEELEYSARAH BEATTIE

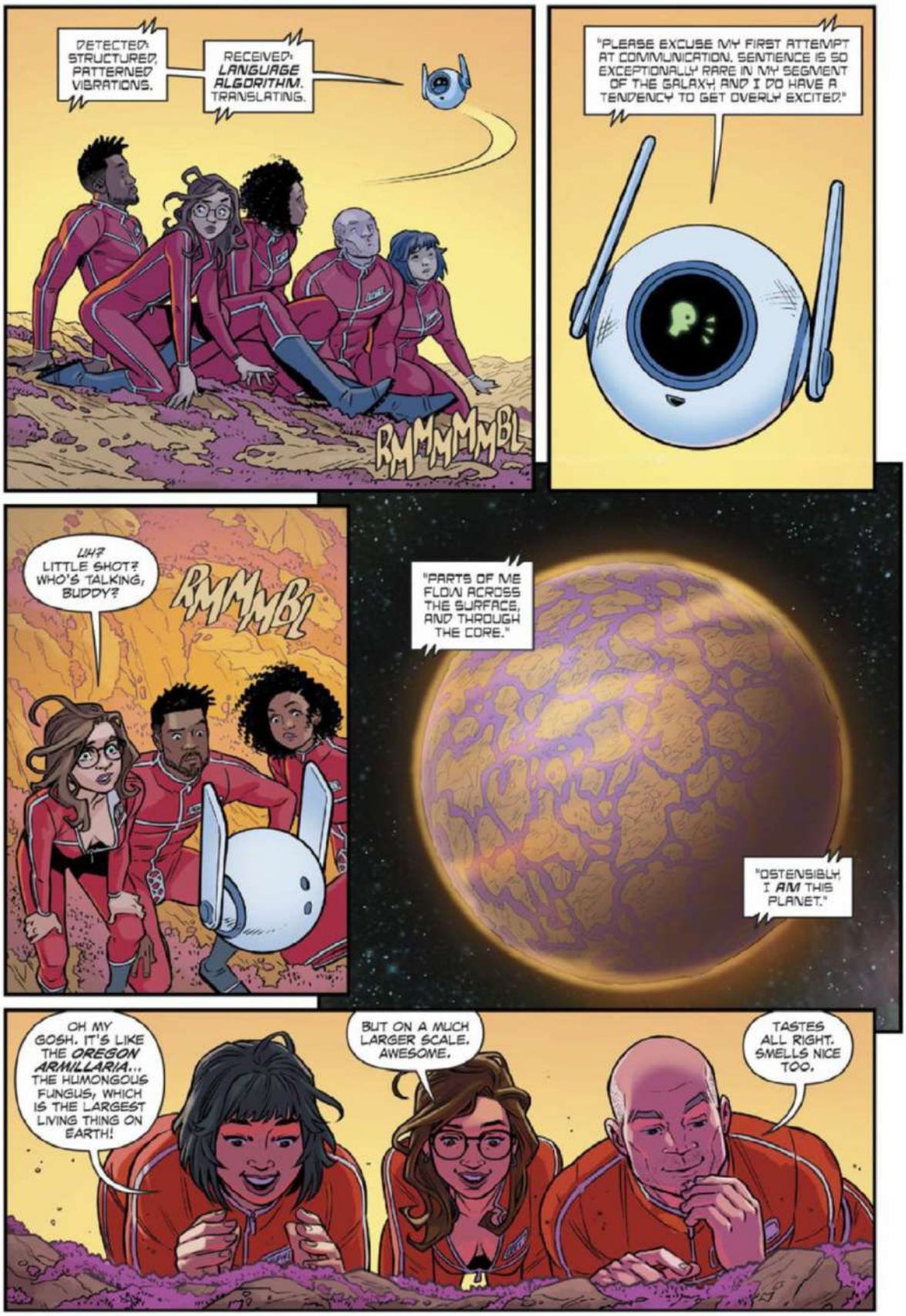
ILLUSTRATION BY
REBEKAH ISAACSKURT MICHAEL RUSSELL

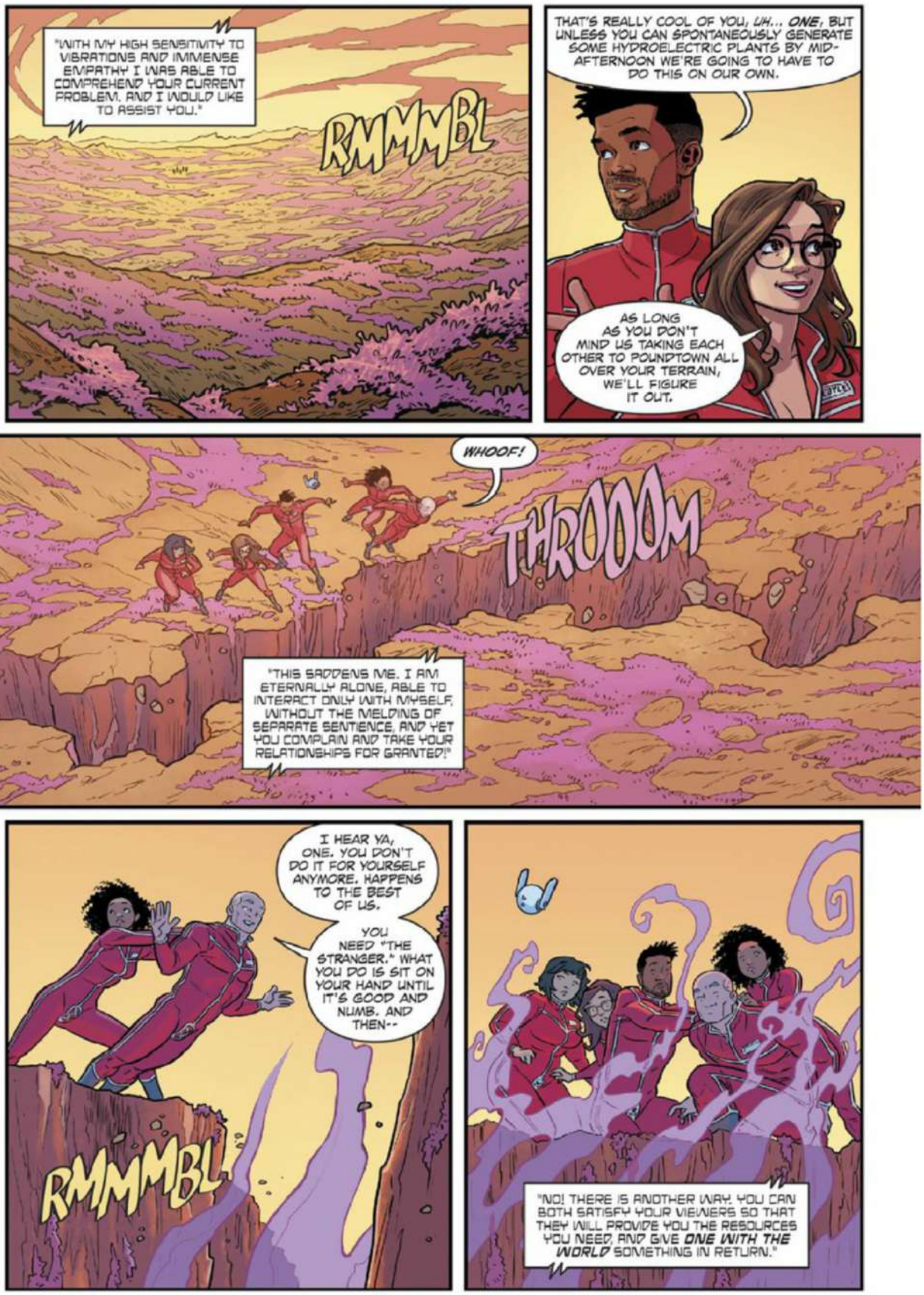
As they skip through space seeking exciting new alien partners to bang for bucks—turns out live-streaming intergalactic porn ain't a bad way to raise research funds—the intrepid crew encounters an entity that gives new meaning to phrase "big love."

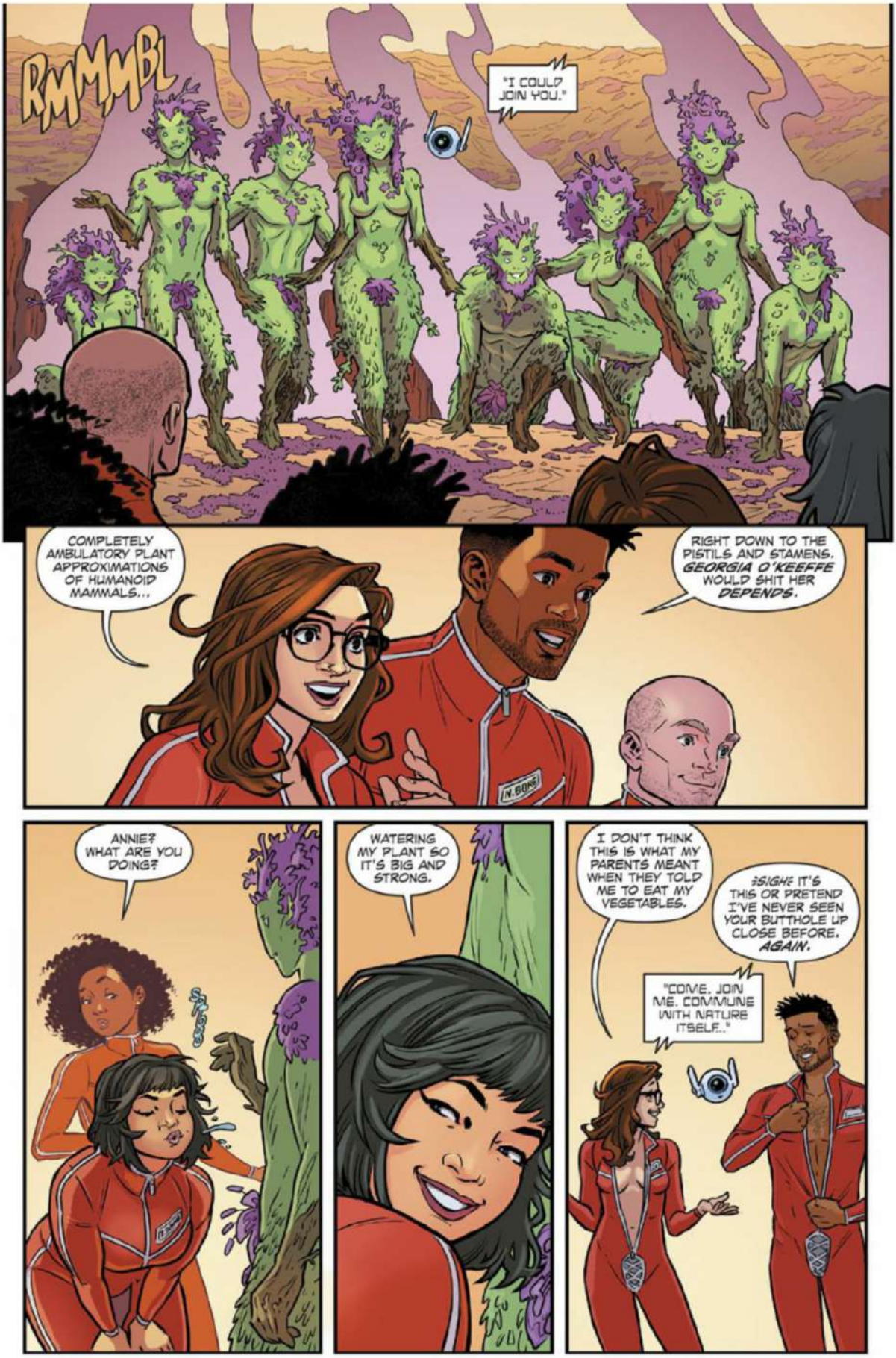


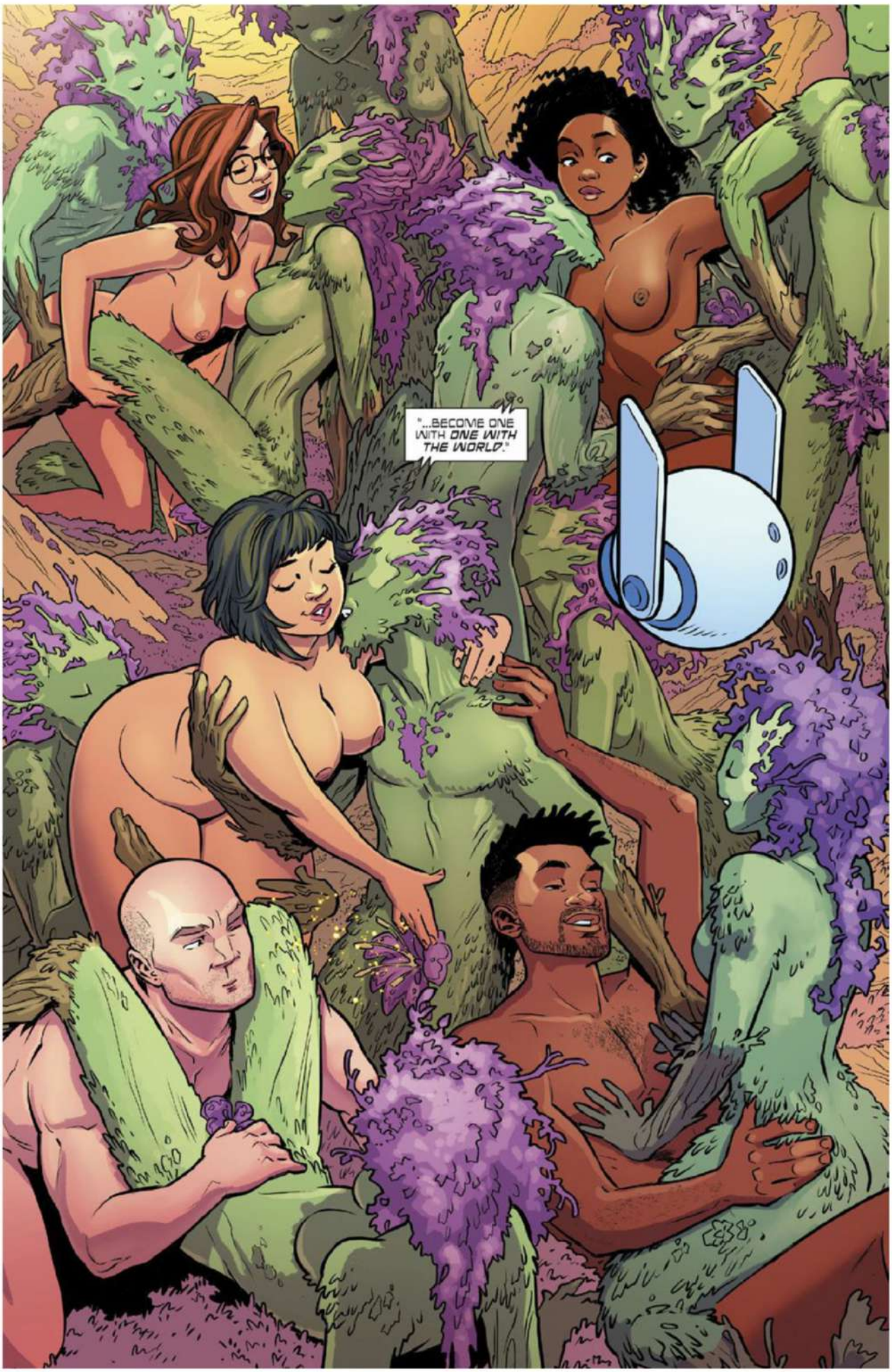
WRITTEN BY
TIM SEELEY and SARAH BEATTIE
VAULT COMICS PRESENTS
Money Shot
Planet: Omalaud-3-Epsilon
NOPE. I'M SORRY. I CAN'T DO IT. I'M OUT.
DRAWN BY
REBEKAH ISAACS
COLORED BY
KURT MICHAEL RUSSELL
LETTERED BY
CRANK!
I'M A FLAVOR TECHNOLOGIST, OKAY? I'M EXTREMELY GIFTED IN THE CHEMISTRY OF SENSATION, AND SCENT FIGURES HEAVILY INTO THAT.
SO, HERE'S MY SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT...
...I CAN'T FUCK THESE ALIENS BECAUSE THEY SMELL REALLY BAD.
GOD DAMN IT, DOUG. SINCE WHEN DO YOU GET TO BE THE PICKY ONE?
HE'S RIGHT, THOUGH. THE WATER HERE HAS A HIGHER CONCENTRATION OF PURINE NUCLEOTIDES, WHICH ARE RELEASED IN THE NATIVES' SKIN, CREATING AN AROMA SIMILAR TO URINE AND--
"GAS FACE," CHRIS. WE CAN'T DO A LIVE SHOW HERE BECAUSE THERE ISN'T ANYTHING SEXY ABOUT US ALL DOING GAS FACE.
GAS FACE? IS THAT ONE OF THOSE HIP-HOP THINGS?
GOD, YOU ARE SO WHITE, OMAR.
MONEY SHOT TRANS MAT FIELD READY.
THANKS, LITTLE SHOT.
SVNNN
snf
OKAY, CREW. TIME--

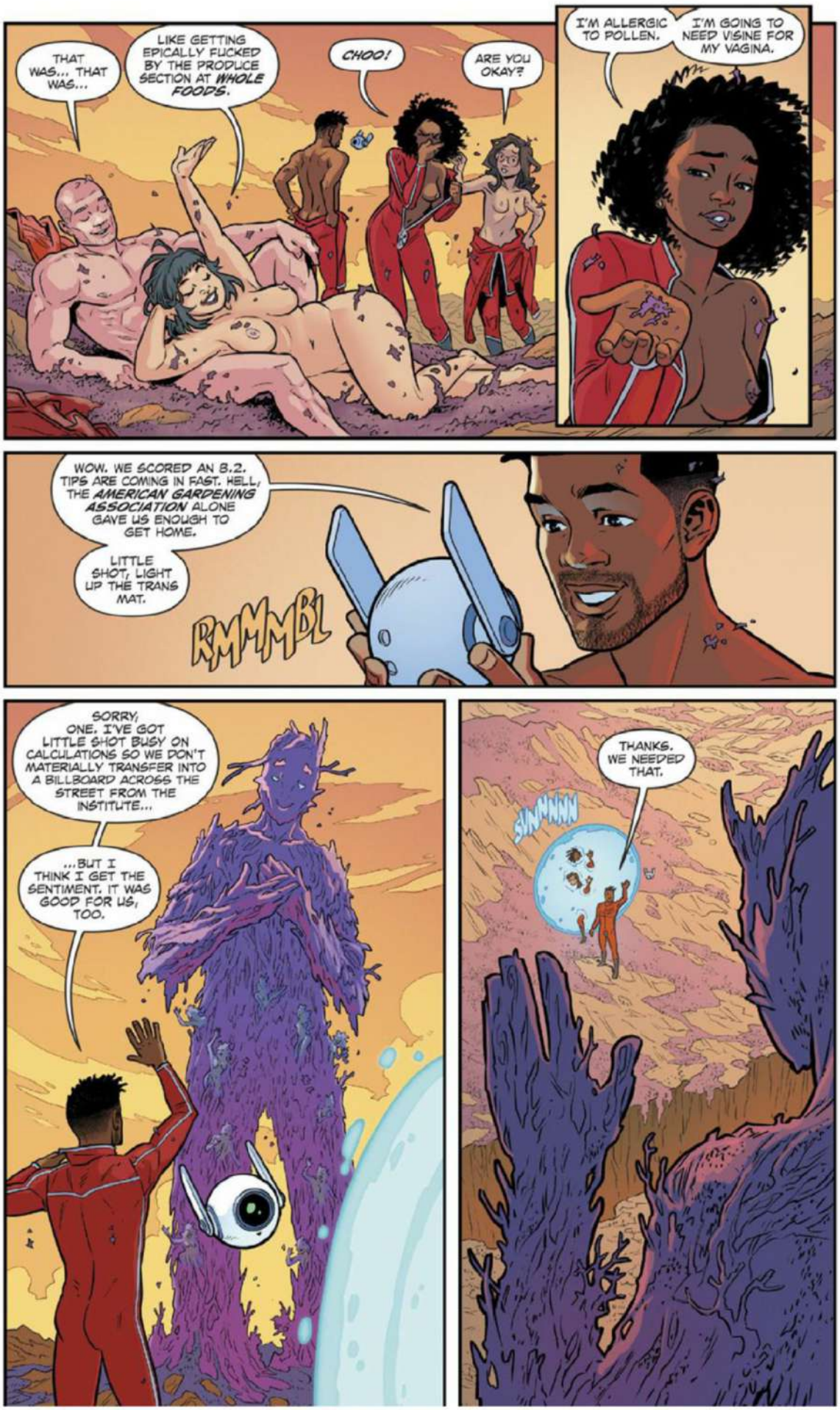

--FOR THE WALK OF SHAME ACROSS SPACE AND TIME.
HEY. UH, OMAR?
SWWW
THIS ISN'T EARTH.
NO, IT ISN'T, BECAUSE WE ONLY HAD ENOUGH POWER LEFT TO MAKE A MEDIUM-RANGE TRIP. SO, I PICKED THIS HOSPITABLE PLANET HALFWAY TO THE MILKY WAY.
BRO, YOU DIDN'T THINK TO MENTION THAT SKIPPING THE PEE-PEE PEOPLE PLANET WAS GONNA STRAND US?
WOULD IT HAVE MATTERED? BESIDES, WHEN YOU'RE SHOOTING POOL WITH A ROPE, IT'S ALWAYS UP TO ME AND MY INSENSITIVE NASAL PALATE TO CARRY THE COCK OVER THE FINISH LINE.
LOOK, WE'RE JUST GOING TO NEED TO SHOOT A SCENE FOR THE SITE AND BUY THE ENERGY TO GET THE REMAINDER OF THE 7.83 MILLION LIGHT-YEARS HOME.
THAT COULD BE TOUGH. THERE'S NO SENTIENT BIPEDAL LIFE HERE. NOT EVEN QUADRUPEDAL.
WHEN HAS THAT STOPPED US BEFORE? SURE, WE'VE BEEN GETTING ON EACH OTHER'S NERVES LATELY, BUT A BIG XXX-PLORERS GENITAL JAMBOREE WILL HAVE US HIGH-FIVING IN THE BREAK ROOM IN NO TIME.
WHO'S WITH ME?
OH SHIT!
BE CAREFUL, LIL' SHOT!
NICE PLANET, OMAR! GREAT CHOICE!
RUMMM

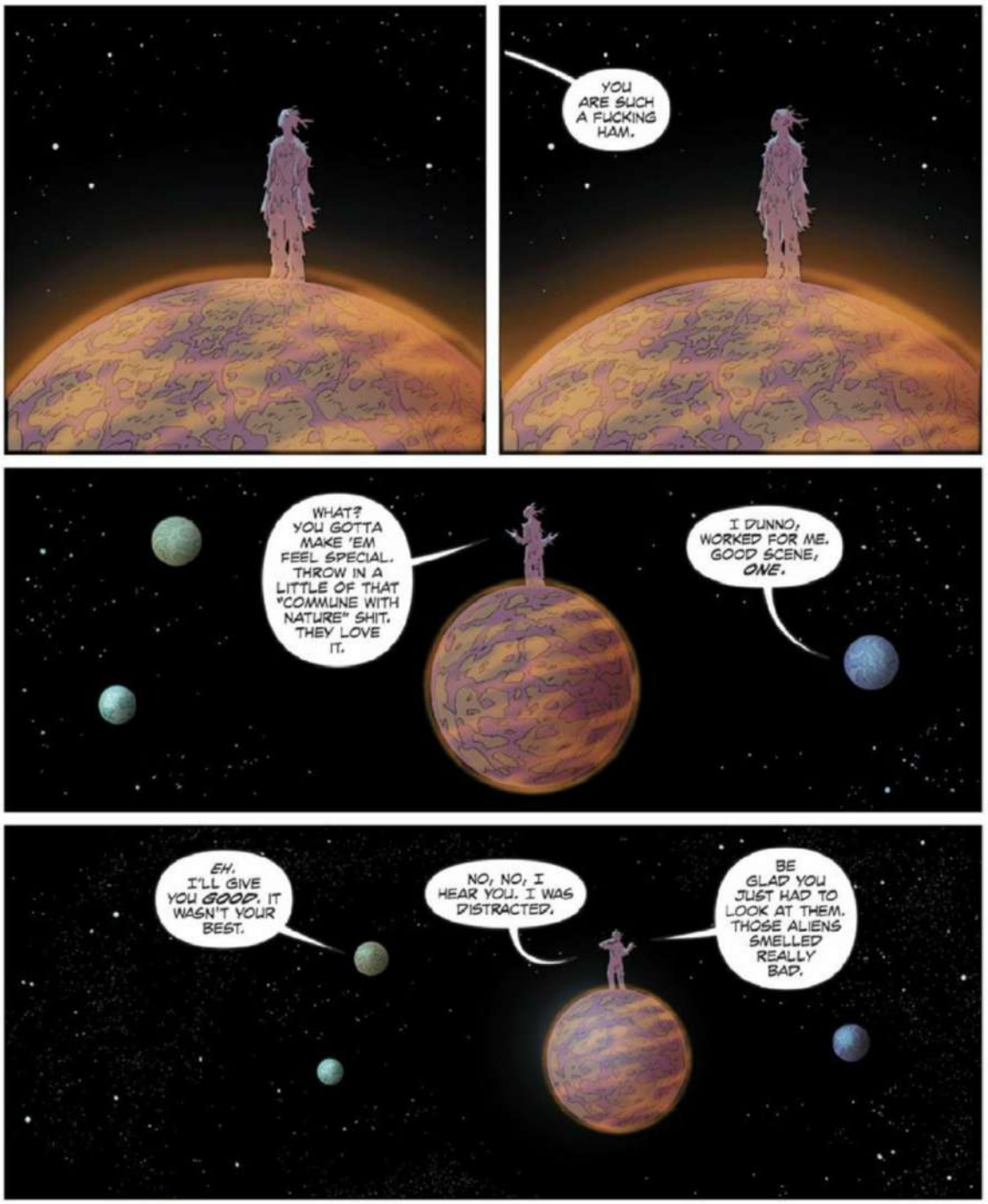

DETECTED: STRUCTURED, PATTERNED VIBRATIONS.
RECEIVED: *LANGUAGE ALGORITHM.* TRANSLATING.
RMMMMMBL
"PLEASE EXCUSE MY FIRST ATTEMPT AT COMMUNICATION. SENTIENCE IS SO EXCEPTIONALLY RARE IN MY SEGMENT OF THE GALAXY AND I DO HAVE A TENDENCY TO GET OVERLY EXCITED."
UH? LITTLE SHOT? WHO'S TALKING, BUDDY?
RMMMBL
"PARTS OF ME FLOW ACROSS THE SURFACE, AND THROUGH THE CORE."
"OSTENSIBLY, I *AM* THIS PLANET."
OH MY GOSH. IT'S LIKE THE *OREGON ARMILLARIA*... THE HUMONGOUS FUNGUS, WHICH IS THE LARGEST LIVING THING ON EARTH!
BUT ON A MUCH LARGER SCALE. AWESOME.
TASTES ALL RIGHT. SMELLS NICE TOO.


"WITH MY HIGH SENSITIVITY TO VIBRATIONS AND IMMENSE EMPATHY I WAS ABLE TO COMPREHEND YOUR CURRENT PROBLEM. AND I WOULD LIKE TO ASSIST YOU."
RMMMBL
THAT'S REALLY COOL OF YOU, UH... ONE, BUT UNLESS YOU CAN SPONTANEOUSLY GENERATE SOME HYDROELECTRIC PLANTS BY MID-AFTERNOON WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO THIS ON OUR OWN.
AS LONG AS YOU DON'T MIND US TAKING EACH OTHER TO POUNDTOWN ALL OVER YOUR TERRAIN, WE'LL FIGURE IT OUT.
WHOOF!
THROOOM
"THIS SADDENS ME. I AM ETERNALLY ALONE, ABLE TO INTERACT ONLY WITH MYSELF, WITHOUT THE MELDING OF SEPARATE SENTIENCE, AND YET YOU COMPLAIN AND TAKE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS FOR GRANTED!"
I HEAR YA, ONE. YOU DON'T DO IT FOR YOURSELF ANYMORE. HAPPENS TO THE BEST OF US.
YOU NEED "THE STRANGER." WHAT YOU DO IS SIT ON YOUR HAND UNTIL IT'S GOOD AND NUMB. AND THEN--
RMMMBL
"NO! THERE IS ANOTHER WAY. YOU CAN BOTH SATISFY YOUR VIEWERS SO THAT THEY WILL PROVIDE YOU THE RESOURCES YOU NEED, AND GIVE ONE WITH THE WORLD SOMETHING IN RETURN."


RMMMBL
"I COULD JOIN YOU."
COMPLETELY AMBULATORY PLANT APPROXIMATIONS OF HUMANOID MAMMALS...
RIGHT DOWN TO THE PISTILS AND STAMENS. GEORGIA O'KEEFFE WOULD SHIT HER DEPENDS.
ANNIE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WATERING MY PLANT SO IT'S BIG AND STRONG.
I DON'T THINK THIS IS WHAT MY PARENTS MEANT WHEN THEY TOLD ME TO EAT MY VEGETABLES.
"COME. JOIN ME. COMMUNE WITH NATURE ITSELF..."
SIGH! IT'S THIS OR PRETEND I'VE NEVER SEEN YOUR BUTTHOLE UP CLOSE BEFORE. AGAIN.


"...BECOME ONE WITH ONE WITH THE WORLD."

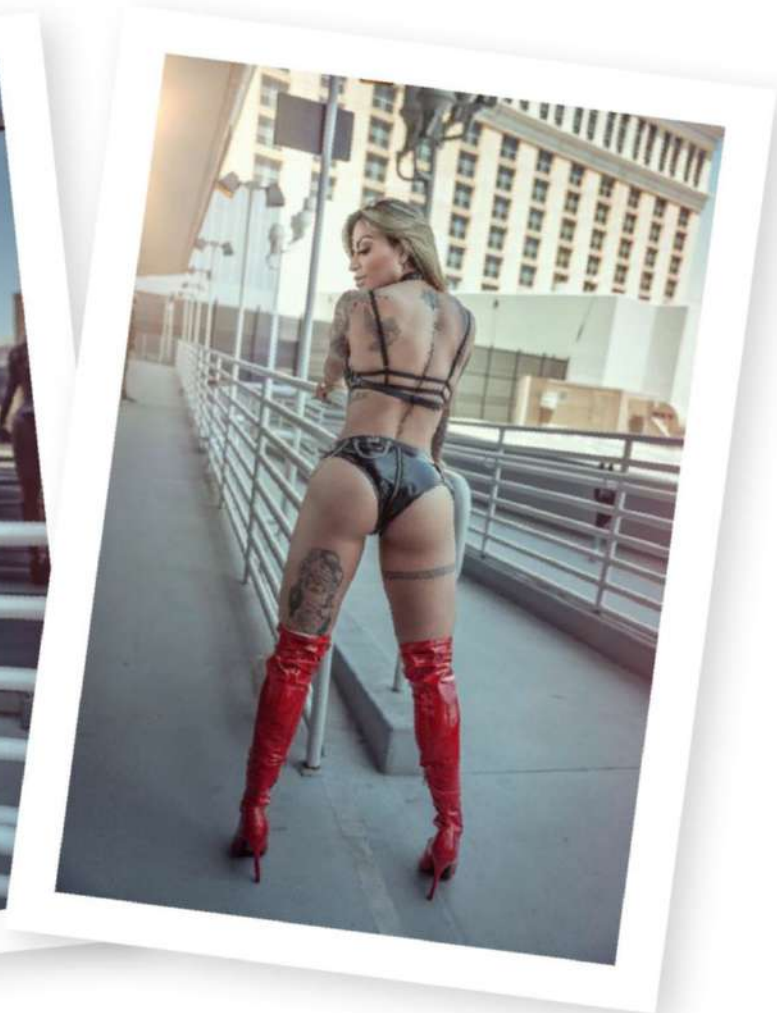

THAT WAS... THAT WAS...
LIKE GETTING EPICALLY FUCKED BY THE PRODUCE SECTION AT WHOLE FOODS.
CHOO!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M ALLERGIC TO POLLEN.
I'M GOING TO NEED VISINE FOR MY VAGINA.
WOW. WE SCORED AN 8.2. TIPS ARE COMING IN FAST. HELL, THE AMERICAN GARDENING ASSOCIATION ALONE GAVE US ENOUGH TO GET HOME.
LITTLE SHOT, LIGHT UP THE TRANS MAT.
RMMMBL
SORRY, ONE. I'VE GOT LITTLE SHOT BUSY ON CALCULATIONS SO WE DON'T MATERIALLY TRANSFER INTO A BILLBOARD ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE INSTITUTE...
...BUT I THINK I GET THE SENTIMENT. IT WAS GOOD FOR US, TOO.
THANKS. WE NEEDED THAT.
SWNNNN


YOU ARE SUCH A FUCKING HAM.
WHAT? YOU GOTTA MAKE 'EM FEEL SPECIAL. THROW IN A LITTLE OF THAT "COMMUNE WITH NATURE" SHIT. THEY LOVE IT.
I DUNNO, WORKED FOR ME. GOOD SCENE, ONE.
EH. I'LL GIVE YOU GOOD. IT WASN'T YOUR BEST.
NO, NO, I HEAR YOU. I WAS DISTRACTED.
BE GLAD YOU JUST HAD TO LOOK AT THEM. THOSE ALIENS SMELLED REALLY BAD.
IT WAS ALL I COULD DO NOT TO MAKE THE GAS FACE.
THE XXX-PLORERS IN "PLEASURE PLANET"

The Fierce

VIVIANE FERREIRA

Model **@Vivvy_ferrari**



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Happy to have you on Playboy. Any exciting projects lined up this year? I'm really excited about this year. I'm working on expanding my brand, collaborating with some amazing creatives, and stepping more into spaces that challenge me. It's all about growth and leveling up.

What part of your journey are you most proud of right now? I'm most proud of how I've stayed authentic. There were moments when it would've been easier to fit into a mold, but I chose to build my own lane.

How would you describe your lifestyle in three words right now? Intentional. Evolving. Empowered.

What's a lesson you've learned that changed the way you see yourself? That confidence isn't about being the loudest person in the room; it's about being secure in who you are, even in silence.

Is there a skill or hobby you've recently picked up or want to learn soon? I've been exploring wellness practices and creative direction. I also want to get deeper into learning new languages and maybe even acting.

Are there any habits you want to leave behind as you step into a new chapter? Overthinking. I'm learning to trust my instincts more and move with clarity instead of doubt.

What's one lifestyle change you made this year that completely transformed you? Prioritizing my mental health and setting boundaries. It changed everything: my energy, my focus, and the way I show up.

What's one lesson from your journey that you wish you'd learned earlier? That not everyone is meant to understand your vision, and that's okay.

Your ideal first date: Something intimate but thoughtful, a great dinner, deep conversation, and maybe a spontaneous walk somewhere beautiful.

Guilty pleasure: Late-night desserts and binge-watching a good series.

What makes you the ultimate partner to have? Loyalty, ambition, and emotional intelligence. I support deeply, love passionately, and always push the people I care about to grow.

When people look back at this moment in your career, what do you hope it represents about who you are? A woman stepping fully into her power, unafraid, self-made, and evolving.

What's one goal you didn't hit last year that you're determined to achieve this time? Scaling my brand internationally and stepping into bigger partnerships.

What new doors or opportunities are you hoping to explore in your career? More global collaborations, creative direction projects, and possibly launching something that blends beauty, lifestyle, and empowerment.

What advice would you give to someone learning to step into their confidence? Stop waiting to feel "ready." Confidence is built through action, not perfection.

Where can our readers catch up with you and stay updated with your work? You can follow me on my social platforms, that's where I share everything from projects to real-life moments. The best is yet to come. Vivvy_ferrari.

Playboy Interview
Spike Lee

A candid conversation with the outspoken actor-director about being black in America, sounding white on the streets and causing trouble everywhere else

BY **ELVIS MITCHELL** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RANDY O'ROURKE**

There are many logical places you might find a famous director, writer, producer or actor—in a bungalow office on the studio back lot, poolside in Bel Air or maybe at a prominent table at Le Dome. But if you're looking for the most successful hyphenate in movies—a man who is the writer, producer, director and star of a series of commercially and critically successful films—forget Hollywood and head for a renovated three-story firehouse in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn.

The fact that Spike Lee has chosen to oversee his burgeoning show-business empire from Fort Greene, his childhood home, is simply one example of his fierce independence. He demands complete control over his often controversial movies, such as Do the Right Thing, School Daze, She's Gotta Have It, Mo' Better Blues and the upcoming Jungle Fever. He directs and stars in a string of Nike commercials with Michael Jordan. He directs music videos. He oversees books and documentaries about himself and his films. He's starting a record company. He owns a store—Spike's Joint—that merchandises every conceivable type of paraphernalia based on his movies.

"Spike is first and foremost a damn good businessman," says actor-director Ossie Davis, who played Da Mayor in Do the Right Thing and Coach Odom in School Daze. But Lee is

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much more than that. With his movies, he has clearly raised the consciousness of Hollywood toward black filmmakers and, more importantly, he has shown that black-themed films can be both commercially and critically viable. But Lee is not satisfied with putting blacks on the screen; he is a vocal advocate for getting blacks jobs behind the scenes as well. He stipulates in his contracts—whether for movies or commercials—that blacks be hired, often in capacities that have not been available to them previously. He insists, for instance, that black artists do the posters for his movies and he has built a loyal repertory company of actors and crew, some of whom have been with him since his days as a student filmmaker.

Probably no movie director since Hitchcock has become so immediately identifiable to the public. Part of that fame stems from Lee's acting, both in his films and in commercials. But Lee, 34, has also positioned himself as a spokesman on a variety of racial issues. Vogue dubbed him a "provocateur," and he seems dedicated to living up to that image.

Shelton Jackson Lee—who was nicknamed Spike by his mother—is the eldest child of a middle-class Brooklyn family. His mother, who died in 1977, was a teacher who demanded educational excellence from all five Lee children; his father is a musician who has written the scores for most of his son's films. Lee was the third generation of his family to attend Morehouse College, the so-called black Harvard, and later went to New York University when he decided to pursue filmmaking. His Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop; We Cut Heads won a student Academy Award and became the first student film ever shown at Lincoln Center's "New Directors, New Films" series.

Despite that success, he was unable to land serious film work. Since Hollywood wasn't helping him, Lee decided to help himself. Armed with spit, prayers and a budget of $175,000, he made She's Gotta Have It, a dizzying, up-to-the-minute look at a relationship through the eyes of an independent and charismatic young black woman and her three suitors. Lee himself played one of those suitors—Mars Blackmon, the fly-mouthed messenger who does everything, including make love, in a pair of Air Jordans that seem to be as large as he is. (Mars lives on in Lee's Nike commercials.) The movie made $8 million and turned Lee into an overnight sensation.

Had Spike's first film been a fluke? Was it a lucky break or was he really a filmmaker?

Lee answered that with School Daze, an ambitious, multilayered tale about life at a black college. Not only did he attempt to examine such sensitive issues as the stratification of light- and dark-skinned blacks and the cliquish assimilation into the middle class that takes place at black colleges, he did it as a musical comedy. School Daze was one of Columbia Pictures's biggest-grossing films of 1988.

It was in 1989 that Lee tackled his most heated subject: race relations on the hottest day of the year on a tense Bedford-Stuyvesant block in Do the Right Thing. From the flamboyant opening to the tragic climax that ends in one character's death at the hands of the police to the double-barreled closing quotes from Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X, Do the Right Thing was proudly combative. When it failed to earn a chance at an Oscar for Best Picture, Lee was publicly outraged, claiming the snub was racially motivated. Lee changed pace with Mo' Better Blues, a movie about a single-minded jazz musician, but he continued to be a controversy magnet—he was branded as anti-Semitic because of the movie's portrayal of two avaricious, small-minded Jewish club owners. Since his newest movie, Jungle Fever, a story about interracial love, promises to be one of his most controversial, we decided the time was right to send Elvis Mitchell, a freelancer and National Public Radio's Weekend Edition entertainment critic, to check in with Lee. Mitchell reports:

"Lee has made my life miserable for the past couple of months. The line 'Elvis was a hero to most, but he never meant shit to me' comes from 'Fight the Power,' the bracing and hard-charging theme of Do the Right Thing, and invariably, in phone-tag intramurals preceding our meetings, every message Lee left on my answering machine began with those deathless words, followed by his trademark cackle.

"I first met with him in his office in Fort Greene, where he was putting together an assemblage of Jungle Fever to show the studio before leaping into his next picture, an epic on the life and times of Malcolm X. The place is cluttered with boxes and people and Lee was extremely busy. We did manage to talk briefly and schedule our first session, which was to take place on a flight from New York to Los Angeles. He was good-humored and prickly; he loves to catch people off guard and make incendiary comments. For instance, he demanded the right to approve this interview before it was published, but when I told him no, he simply cackled.

"Our first lengthy session, squeezed in between drops during a bumpy flight and a showing of Dick Tracy, demonstrated that Lee was a man of many moods. He preferred judging questions to answering them and seemed more combative than comfortable. But our second session, which took place at his New York apartment a few blocks from his office, was far more relaxed and productive. He responded to the questions with candor and enthusiasm and even posed some of his own. He asserted his shyness and spoke about his difficulty with interviews, even as he talked at length.

"We started with the obvious question."

> "Black people can't be racist. Black people don't have the power to keep people from getting jobs or the vote."

PLAYBOY: You like to cause trouble, don't you?

LEE: Sure. I was an instigator as a kid. I just like to make people think, stir 'em up. What's wrong with that?

PLAYBOY: Jungle Fever certainly seems likely to stir things up.

LEE: [*Laughs*] You think that one's gonna cause some trouble?

PLAYBOY: When you write lines such as "You never see black men with fine white women"? What was the word in the script—mugly? Wasn't that the way you described the white women black men go out with?

LEE: [*Laughs*] But that's true. I've never seen black men with fine white women. They be ugly. Mugly, dogs. And you always see white men with good-looking black women. But, hey, every time you see an interracial couple somewhere, people stare at 'em.

PLAYBOY: Come on, Spike. That's a big generalization. We've seen good-looking interracial couples.

LEE: I said what I meant to. Never see it.

PLAYBOY: We know you've said in the past that you won't get involved with white women.

LEE: I don't need the trouble. Like I don't have enough as it is. Black women don't go for that, don't like that shit. I just don't find white women attractive, that's all. And it's way too many fine black women out there.

PLAYBOY: Isn't there an interracial marriage in your family?

LEE: Yes. My father. My father remarried. He married a white woman.

PLAYBOY: Did that have any effect on your making Jungle Fever?

LEE: Why? Why would it? I didn't talk to my father about it. I talk to my father only when it comes to scoring my movies. This isn't about him.

PLAYBOY: There's another potential controversy in Jungle Fever. In the opening, you address the audience directly, not as a character, and tell them that if they think you're a racist, they can kiss your "black ass." You say it twice. Why?

LEE: I felt it was justified. I wanted to hit all that, about race, before anybody else.

PLAYBOY: How did test audiences respond to it?

LEE: The test audiences liked it. I don't think Universal is crazy about that shit.

PLAYBOY: Will it stay in the movie?

LEE: I guess it will. I do have final cut.

PLAYBOY: Why does so much of Jungle Fever emphasize racial anger?

LEE: Why shouldn't it? It's out there.

PLAYBOY: You've said that black people are incapable of racism. Do you really believe that?

LEE: Yeah, I do. Let me clear that up, 'cause people are always taking stuff out of context. Black people can't be racist. Racism is an institution. Black people don't have the power to keep hundreds of people from getting jobs or the vote. Black people didn't bring nobody else over in boats. They had to add shit to the Constitution so we could get the vote. Affirmative action is about finished in this country now. It's through. And black people had nothing to do with that, those kinds of decisions. So how can black people be racist when that's the standard? Now, black people can be prejudiced. Shit, everybody's prejudiced about something. I don't think there will ever be an end to prejudice. But racism, that's a different thing entirely.

PLAYBOY: You've been quoted as saying that no white man could properly do the Malcolm X story, which you're preparing to direct.

LEE: That's right.

PLAYBOY: You don't think Norman Jewison, who was originally scheduled to direct, could pull it off?

LEE: No, I don't. Why do people pull that shit with black people? Don't you think Francis Coppola brought something special to The Godfather because he was an Italian? Don't you think that Martin Scorsese brought something special to GoodFellas because he was Italian?

PLAYBOY: Marlon Brando's not Italian and he was in The Godfather. Isn't the point that there simply aren't enough minorities to be considered?

LEE: Yeah. Now, when that shit changes, then we can talk. Until there are enough black directors, minorities working in movies so it's not an issue, we have to address it different.

PLAYBOY: But what about one director having skills another director doesn't?

LEE: I like Norman Jewison's movies. I respect what he does. I saw In the Heat of the Night, A Soldier's Story. I respect his work. But I think a black man is more qualified, especially in this case. Now, I do think black people are qualified to direct movies about white people.

PLAYBOY: How does that work?

LEE: Because we grow up with white images all the time, in TV, in movies, in books. It's everywhere; you can't get around it. The white world surrounds us. What do white people see of black people? Look at the shit they have us do in movies: "Right on, jive turkey!" [*Laughs*]

PLAYBOY: There's a line in Jungle Fever that says a black man won't rise past a certain level in white corporate America.

LEE: It's true. How many black men do you see running Xerox? How many black men you see running IBM? Shit, we need to be black entrepreneurs, run our own shit. That's what it's about.

PLAYBOY: Is that what's behind your store, Spike's Joint?

LEE: It started off as this mom-and-pop operation. We sold T-shirts for the movies and stuff, but we just had too much stuff going on. So, yeah, I wanted to get it going the way I wanted. I want to control the business, and it's easier to do it from the store. Black people just have to understand we need to become owners. Ownership is important. I don't mean to get down on Eddie Murphy, but he only owns 50 percent of Eddie Murphy Productions. His two white managers each own 25 percent of Eddie Murphy Productions. He don't even own 100 percent of himself.

PLAYBOY: You have some other complaints about Murphy, don't you?

LEE: My problem with Eddie has to do with the hiring of black people. He will maintain he can't do nothin' about getting black people hired at Paramount. That's bullshit. A man who makes them a billion dollars can't do nothing about getting black people hired at Paramount? I can't believe that. In my contract, I demand a black man does the design and artwork for my poster. Eddie built Paramount. He built their house, he can bring some people in there if he wants to.

PLAYBOY: Overall, you seem to have become less critical about other black performers. Have you mellowed?

LEE: Look, I was never that critical. When I said that shit about Whoopi Goldberg, I was talking about the contact lenses, she was wearing blue contact lenses. She don't wear them blue contact lenses no more, do she?

PLAYBOY: What's the deal between you and Arsenio Hall?

LEE: [*Smiles*] Deal? What deal? I been on his show twice. You have to be specific.

PLAYBOY: Wasn't there a quarrel between the two of you?

LEE: I criticized him once. I never criticized him as a talk-show host.

PLAYBOY: Our understanding is that you appeared on his show last summer and were supposed to go back about a month later and were disinvited.

LEE: Yeah. They canceled on me at the last minute. Didn't even hear from him. Some assistant said they didn't want me on the show. It's in the past. Nothing to say about it. It's all been worked out. I was on his show for Mo' Better.

PLAYBOY: Jungle Fever and Do the Right Thing both deal with the relationships between blacks and Italians in the outer boroughs of New York. Why did you choose to deal with that twice?

LEE: Well, history has proven that in New York City, those are the two most violent, volatile combinations of ethnic groups. Black people and Jewish people have static, but it rarely ever elevates to a physical thing. Little Italy, Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge, Canarsie—black people know that these are neighborhoods that you don't fuck around in.

"Eddie Murphy will maintain he can't do nothin' about getting black people hired at Paramount. That's bullshit."

PLAYBOY: What do you remember as a kid about that kind of thing—that feeling of fear you talk about?

LEE: Well, I grew up in sort of an Italian neighborhood. I lived in Cobble Hill before I moved here to Fort Greene. A lot of Italian people there. And we were really the first black family to move into Cobble Hill. For the first couple of days, we got called "nigger," but we were basically left alone. We weren't perceived as a threat, because there was only one of us. In fact, some of my best friends who lived down the block were the Tuccis. Louis Tucci, Joe Tucci. Annabella's [*Sciorra]* family [*in Jungle Fever*], they're the Tuccis.

PLAYBOY: While growing up in that kind of neighborhood, what was your feeling about Italians?

LEE: I think Cobble Hill is a lot different than Bensonhurst. You had a lot of Jewish people in Cobble Hill, too, so it just seemed to be more—I don't want to use the word intelligent, but—

PLAYBOY: Tolerant?

LEE: Yeah, that would be a good word.

PLAYBOY: It just seems odd that the kind of neighborhood you depict in your pictures is so different from the kind you grew up in. Did you ever have an encounter in one of those places like Bensonhurst?

LEE: No. See, I went to John Dewey High School on Coney Island. But some of my friends went to other high schools, like F.D.R., Fort Hamilton,

X

schools like that. They used to chase the black kids from the school to the subway station. A lot of my friends got chased.

PLAYBOY: Do you ever go to Bensonhurst just to see what it's like over there?

LEE: A couple of days after Yusef Hawkins got murdered, this reporter from Newsday invited me to walk around Bensonhurst with him. Other than that, I never went to it until we shot Jungle Fever over there.

PLAYBOY: What was that walk like?

LEE: Well, I was a celebrity, so it was "Spike, sign an autograph." "Spike, you bringing Michael Jordan around here?" "Spike, you bringing Flavor Flav?" It was exactly like the scene in Do the Right Thing between me and Pino over the cigarette machine, with an allowance. Pino says Magic Johnson, Eddie Murphy and Prince aren't black, they're more than black. That's the way I thought I was being viewed. I was "Spike Lee," I wasn't a black person, so they asked me for my autograph. If I was anybody else, I could have gotten a bat over the head.

PLAYBOY: How does it make you feel to be a celebrity in the neighborhood where you more or less grew up?

LEE: Well, I think that people don't necessarily look at me as a celebrity, because they know I grew up here. It's no big thing; they see me every day, buying the paper or walking to work and stuff like that. People say hello, but it's not like [*a throaty scream*] "Spike Lee!" It's not no Beatles shit or anything like that.

PLAYBOY: What do people on the street say? Do they tell you what they like or dislike about your movies?

LEE: They come up and tell me how much they like Mars Blackmon, or they tell me what they think I should do for my next movie. I'm always getting these comments from people who know exactly what my next movie should be. It's funny—I guess everybody's a director. Or a critic.

PLAYBOY: When you were a kid, did you know you wanted to make movies?

LEE: I didn't grow up thinking I wanted to make movies, be a director. Everybody in my neighborhood saw a lot of movies. There was nothing special about going to the movies. I didn't know what I wanted to do. At Morehouse College, I had a combined major of communications: radio-television, journalism, film—not film right away.

PLAYBOY: Do you remember the first film you saw that made you want to make movies?

LEE: Wait a minute. I never had a moment like that. It was never, "I saw Lawrence of Arabia when I was two and suddenly I was hit by the magic power of film." That's bullshit. Like I told you, I just went to the movies. Nobody thought about being a director, not me or anybody else. I read that all the time "After I saw that picture, I knew there was nothing else for me to do"—that's a lie. It's just bullshit when people say that.

PLAYBOY: Maybe it's a lie sometimes, but certainly, some directors see movies as kids and want to make films.

LEE: I think it's bullshit. It's just something almost every director says. I have never believed it. I tell you this: It wasn't that way for me. "That's what makes movies seem like this magical thing" or somethin'. That's just Hollywood bullshit, people saying that shit because it makes makin' movies special, and the people who make movies special. The first time I went on a movie set, it didn't look like nothin' magical to me. [Laughs] It was the exact same thing I was doing on my student movies, only it was bigger and they were spendin' more money. That's what keeps black people out of movies—the idea that makin' movies is some special thing, some calling or something. That's what I'm about—demystifying movies. I want to do away with that bullshit.

PLAYBOY: Do you remember the first Sidney Poitier film you saw?

LEE: It had to be Lilies of the Field. I hated that movie. I must have been six, seven years old, but even at that age, I felt like putting a rock through the screen. Later with these nuns! You better get outa here before one of 'em says that you raped 'em! But we owe a lot to Sidney Poitier, because in order for us to get to where we are today, those films had to be made. And Sidney had to do what he had to do. He was the perfect Negro.

PLAYBOY: What did you think when you saw Guess Who's Coming to Dinner—especially now that you're doing a movie about interracial romance?

LEE: It was white liberal b.s. You have to look at it in the context of when this film came out. This film came out in the 1960s, during the whole civil rights movement. At that time, it was a great advance for black people in the cinema.

PLAYBOY: That aside, what were you thinking as you were sitting there watching it? Were you bored? Angry?

LEE: I wasn't angry. It was just that the only way they would accept this guy was because he was a perfect human being: a doctor, from Harvard or whatever it was. Making a long-distance call and leaving the money out. That's the only way the audience would accept him, because he was such a fine, upstanding citizen.

Sidney had a great burden. He was carrying the whole weight of the hopes and aspirations of the African Americans on his shoulders. I think that had a lot to do with the roles that he chose. I think he felt he could not do a "negative" character. That's something I have tried to do, not get into that whole positive-negative image thing.

PLAYBOY: You must hear that sometimes.

LEE: Sometimes? All the time. Black folks tell me all the time that my image is not a positive portrayal of black people.

PLAYBOY: Did that start with She's Gotta Have It?

LEE: She's Gotta Have It has Nola Darling. She's a negative portrayal of black women and just reinforces what white people think about black women being loose, anyway. And School Daze—again, it was negative images of black people, showing fighting all the time. I was airing dirty laundry with our differences, which I feel are petty and superficial.

Do the Right Thing, I've got more negative images. None of the black people in Do the Right Thing have a job. It shows we're all lazy or whatever. It shows Sweet Dick Willie pissing against the wall, and that's a negative image of black people.

PLAYBOY: But obviously, you understand the complaints.

LEE: I understand what that means, positive black role models, because of the way black people have been shown in movies and on TV. But it's unrealistic to make every character I come up with a doctor or a lawyer or something that's just a flat character. Like, in Jungle Fever, I bring in drugs because it's time. One of the characters is a basehead, because it's appropriate.

PLAYBOY: What about a movie such as School Daze, in which you're showing the environment at a black college? Did that get a negative reaction?

LEE: Yeah. The schools themselves were saying it would be a negative portrayal of black higher education. That's one of the reasons why, three weeks into shooting, we got kicked off Morehouse's campus. Spelman refused to let us shoot there at all.

PLAYBOY: In School Daze, you showed a part of the black culture—the black middle class—that's not usually shown. Didn't they want that to be shown?

LEE: Yeah, but a lot of the administration and faculty in these schools, these are old schools. To me, they're very backward.

PLAYBOY: Did many of your fellow students rebel at middle-class traditions at Morehouse?

LEE: Yeah. We never got a really big thing, but there were students who were not going along with the program. They didn't want to be that "Morehouse Man."

PLAYBOY: How many films did you shoot when you were in school?

LEE: At Morehouse? I might have done one or two. It was there that I had my appetite whet. That's where I became interested in film and that's where I decided I wanted to become a filmmaker. That's why I went to NYU. At NYU, I started making films.

PLAYBOY: It took you three years to get any work after you graduated from NYU. Did that bother you?

LEE: I have no bitterness. The way it happens is the way it should happen. We had to struggle for three years, but I was a better filmmaker. I don't think

I could have made She's Gotta Have It straight out of film school.

PLAYBOY: What did it take for you to be ready to make it?

LEE: More maturity. And to be hungrier.

PLAYBOY: Where did the money come from?

LEE: Everywhere. Even though the budget for the film was a $175,000, we never had that money all at one time. When we began the shoot that July, we only had $13,000 in the bank.

Man, that movie was so hard to make. We were cashin' in bottles for change, because we had so little money. I remember, we were shootin' in Nola's loft in the middle of the summer—it musta been 104 degrees up there. When it's so hot, people drink a lot and I remember sayin', "Don't throw away the bottles." That's the one of my movies I can't watch again, She's Gotta Have It.

PLAYBOY: Was it so painful to make?

LEE: Yeah, it was hard. We only shot for 12 days, but every night, after we finished the day's work, I had to think about tryin' to go out and raise money for the very next day. Things have changed so much now, you know. We have money for contingencies, reshoots or whatever. Each picture is a little easier. But also, with She's Gotta Have It, the acting was bad.

PLAYBOY: You don't like the performances?

LEE: No, not at all. They just weren't very good. I didn't really know how to direct. I wasn't good with the actors, in telling 'em what I wanted from 'em. I was just out of film school, and that was my only experience. In film school, you don't really get to work with actors, you never really have much contact with the actors, and so you're kinda intimidated by 'em. You don't deal with 'em much at all.

PLAYBOY: What was your personal life like at the time?

LEE: Everything was wrapped up in getting this film made. We invited the American independent distributors to come to the San Francisco Film Festival, because that's where the world premiere was going to happen. In the middle of the film, there was a blackout in San Francisco. Not the whole city but that particular neighborhood. So for half an hour—the theater was packed, too—people just sat there. I was sitting there in a chair in the dark, on the stage. There was a question-and-answer period while we waited for the lights to come back on. So I answered questions in the dark, and nobody left.

"Black folks tell me all the time that my image is not a positive portrayal of black people."

PLAYBOY: Did you start laughing at that point? You'd been through so much.

LEE: No. I said it was an act of God. What is happening? At the beginning of the movie, a blackout. But that's where the bidding war started. We sold it to Island Pictures for $475,000 and went on to make $8 million.

PLAYBOY: How long before you made your next picture?

LEE: That has been the biggest gap of all my films, between She's Gotta Have It and School Daze. I had to stay with that film a long time. Promote it, get it out there. It came out in '86, and School Daze didn't come out until '88. But since then, we've made a film every year.

PLAYBOY: School Daze sounds like it was overly ambitious, going from a four-character piece essentially in one room to a big musical with lots of production numbers and lots of characters.

LEE: I didn't think that was overly ambitious. I know that has been reflected in some people's reviews of the film. What I wanted to do in School Daze was, in that two-hour movie, was compress my four years of Morehouse.

PLAYBOY: Were you surprised by the response that your next film, Do the Right Thing, got at the Cannes Film Festival?

LEE: That was a big response. You don't know. Sometimes, what might play in the States might not go in Europe, and vice versa. But I knew they would like She's Gotta Have It. It had a very European feel to it, the way it was cut and shot and that kind of stuff.

PLAYBOY: What about what German director Wim Wenders said?

LEE: Oh, yeah, he said that Do the Right Thing was "not heroic"? Yeah, very. I was disappointed. I hold no grudges against Wim Wenders now. I never had anything against Steven Soderbergh [who won the Golden Palm that year], because it was not his doing. He made a very good film with sex, lies, and videotape. It was not his fault that he got the award. I know he's happy he got it, but I had no ill feelings toward Steven, and we're still friends today. [Sex, lies, and videotape] was very, very heroic. Especially this James Spader character, this guy jerking off all the time to the TV. Taping sexual confessions of women. Very heroic.

PLAYBOY: You said that Mo' Better Blues, your fourth film, was consciously noncontroversial. Not only are you dealing with interracial romance in Jungle Fever, but you're also dealing with drugs. Why add two controversial elements?

LEE: I don't know. I might have given it the interracial thing, but how is drugs controversial?

PLAYBOY: Because you purposefully avoided, you said, drugs as a subplot previously in Do the Right Thing.

LEE: Yeah, but I don't think the word is controversy. I'm not gonna let any critic determine my agenda. I find it preposterous that critics would attack me for not having drugs in Do the Right Thing, as if drugs were the complete domain of black people. How could you do a film set in Bed-Stuy without any drugs? Easy. We black people aren't the only people on drugs. The reason you've got drugs on the so-called agenda is because you've got young white kids in middle-class America and white suburbia who are doing crack and whatever. Then it becomes a national problem. As long as it was contained within the black ghettos, you would never see that problem being dealt with on the covers of Time or Newsweek. And if that is the case, which it is, then why have I never read of any white filmmakers being chastised for not having drugs in their films?

PLAYBOY: Obviously, the critics thought the criticism was valid because of that particular neighborhood.

LEE: Hey, there's as much drugs in Bed-Stuy as there is on Wall Street or the Upper East Side.

PLAYBOY: How did you get hooked up with the Fruit of Islam? Some people criticize that group's militancy and its association with Louis Farrakhan.

LEE: When we did location scouting for Do the Right Thing, we needed a block in Bed-Stuy that had two empty lots on the corner that faced each other. We had to build a pizzeria, and build a Korean fruit and vegetable stand. It turned out there were two or three crack houses on the block, or in the vicinity, so knowing the Fruit—they don't play that—we brought them in. They closed down the crack houses and they stayed on for security for the rest of the film.

PLAYBOY: It seems ironic that the movie doesn't deal with drugs and you had to run the crack dealers off the block.

LEE: I don't find it ironic. Drugs is a part of our society, but I felt they should not be a part of this story. This film was really about 24 hours in the life of this block on the hottest day of the summer. It was really about race relations. I didn't want to put drugs in this.

PLAYBOY: You seem very sure of yourself, and yet you've consistently portrayed the characters you play in your films as powerless and ineffectual.

LEE: Yeah, well, I don't see the need to make myself the hero in my movies. What's the point in that?

PLAYBOY: Why do you keep playing the same kind of character?

LEE: I'm not that impressed with myself as an actor. I don't think much of myself that way. I don't have a whole lot of range as far as acting. Mars Blackmon, that was all right. I didn't expect people to like him, the way

they did.

PLAYBOY: What makes you continue to act in your pictures?

LEE: It really has to do with box office, with having somewhat of a little appeal with the audience. People will be more apt to come to one of my films if I'm in it.

PLAYBOY: Will you be in Malcolm X?

LEE: Probably. [*Laughs*] I still need to be in my films.

PLAYBOY: Mo' Better Blues was criticized for its portrayal of Jews. There's even a story about your father having gone down to apologize to the owner of a Village jazz club because of your portrayal of Jews in that film.

LEE: Huh? I can't respond to that, because I never heard it before. Look, Siskel and Ebert—I shouldn't say this, 'cause they're fans of mine. Soon as Mo' Better Blues comes out, they [start talking about] stereotypes. Then came [New York Times critic] Caryn James with her stupid-ass article. Nobody was supposed to take those guys as representin' all Jews. Besides, where was everybody when that what's-his-name movie with Steven Seagal came out?

PLAYBOY: Marked for Death?

LEE: What about that racist piece of shit? That's a number-one hit for a couple of weeks, and where was everybody when that came out? They had nothin' to say about it.

PLAYBOY: What did you think when you saw it?

LEE: I didn't see it.

PLAYBOY: One of the best things in your films tends to be their improvisational quality, the way you handle the interplay between people.

LEE: Yeah, it helps to have actors who know how to improvise. Not everybody's good at it.

PLAYBOY: Like who?

LEE: I don't wanna say.

PLAYBOY: Wait a second. You're worried about hurting somebody's feelings? When the Oscars came around in 1990, you didn't seem so worried about hurting people's feelings.

LEE: That didn't have nothin' to do with hurting people's feelings. It was that Fred Schelp Sheep— What's that guy's name? That Australian guy?

PLAYBOY: Fred Schepisi? What about him?

LEE: You know, the one who did Driving Miss Daisy?

PLAYBOY: You mean Bruce Beresford.

LEE: Him. Yeah, him. Bruce Beresford. When he was complaining about not getting a nomination for Best Director, nobody made anything of that. Or when [*Richard*] Zanuck, he started complaining, you know, about Driving Miss Daisy, how could it get a Best Picture nomination and not get a Best Director nomination? It was as soon as I started sayin' we got robbed on Do the Right Thing, suddenly, I'm the one. I'm the problem.

PLAYBOY: People think you're an artist, and they have higher expectations of you. When you complain about being shut out, people are let down by it.

LEE: I don't buy that. I don't believe that. I was complaining about the Oscars because we should've got a Best Picture nomination.

PLAYBOY: A lot of movies that stand the test of time never get nominated for Oscars or they never win Oscars.

LEE: Oscars, they can mean money. You know, you get a Best Picture nomination and the studios, they can promote a picture, advertise. They can get more people to come out and see it. People were afraid to come see Do the Right Thing as it was, afraid there would be riots and shit.

PLAYBOY: Some people claim that you use racism as a tool to strike out at others, such as in your attack of New York Times critic Janet Maslin's review of School Daze, when you said, "I bet she can't even dance. Does she have rhythm?"

LEE: She didn't get the point of School Daze, and the way she dissed it, talking about "my little musical." Race is an issue, and I don't always use it. You'd think I don't like critics. I don't like The New York Times. Well, I read Vincent Canby.

PLAYBOY: You've always had a dicey relationship with the press. Stanley Crouch, in his essay "Do the Race Thing," discusses how you tried to have it both ways with Do the Right Thing, by quoting Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

LEE: That ignorant motherfucker. He has no idea what he's talking about. Shit, what about all those motherfuckers like Joe Klein at New York sayin' Do the Right Thing would cause a riot, because it was released during the summer? Or David Denby callin' it irresponsible? That's irresponsible. And it's lazy. When the riots didn't happen, when Dinkins got elected, neither one of them, none of the people who said that shit, said they were wrong in print or apologized.

PLAYBOY: What about the Nike Air Jordan controversy? New York Post columnist Phil Mushnick wrote that you and Michael Jordan glamourize expensive shoes and sometimes kids are killed in robberies over them.

LEE: Shit. What about it? It's my fault, it's Michael Jordan's fault, that kids are buying those shoes? That's just the trigger. There's more to it than that. Something is wrong where these young black kids have to put so much weight, where their whole life is tied up—their life is so hopeless—that their life is defined by a pair of sneakers. Or a sheepskin coat. The problem is not the coat or the sneakers. I mean, we tried to explore that with Do the Right Thing with the radio. These young black kids who are lost. Radio Raheem [the character who's killed by the police]—his life was that radio. That really defined his existence. I mean, without that radio, he's invisible; people don't notice him. But with that radio blasting Public Enemy and "Fight the Power," you had to deal with him. It made people notice him. It gave him self-worth. And when Sal killed his radio, he might as well have killed his mother or his father or himself. That's why he tried to choke the shit out of Sal.

> "People were afraid to come see 'Do the Right Thing,' afraid there would be riots and shit."

PLAYBOY: What about that Sports Illustrated article where Jordan was almost reduced to tears? He's publicly remorseful, disturbed by what his endorsement may have caused.

LEE: What the fuck? You think I'm happy black men are dying over shoes? Hell, no! Hell, no! I'm upset about it too. Is every black man who wears those shoes a drug dealer? Hell, no! You know how that is. Look at you. You're wearing Pumps. Are you a drug dealer? Hell, no! They're oversimplifying the issue.

PLAYBOY: Okay, let's ask an easy question: What is Michael Jordan really like?

LEE: Mike's a down brother. Mike just had a lot of confidence in me. He was a young brother. He liked She's Gotta Have It. He felt like I did, that it was important that we hook up. Mike pulled me to the side and said, "Look, there's been some grumbling where Nike is trying to ease you out. But as long as I'm around, you're around." I said, "I hear you, Mike. Thank you for getting me back." That's why I did those commercials. I thought it was important that me and Mike do something together. Young black people in different fields, hooking up.

PLAYBOY: Did your parents encourage you to go into the arts?

LEE: Not really. Whatever you wanted to do was fine with them. They encouraged us, but they never pushed me in any direction. I will say that we had great exposure to the arts at a young age. We had to. My mother taught art; she liked the theater and liked music. My father is a jazz musician—he played with folk singers, too, like Theodore Bikel and Josh White—so mu

sic was always being played in the house. I remember my mother dragging me to The King and I with Yul Brynner when I was little. I started crying; I was scared to death. She had to take me home.

PLAYBOY: What was the first thing you remember sitting through and really enjoying as a kid, even if it didn't make you want to be a filmmaker?

LEE: When I was real little, I saw Hatari. Remember that? John Wayne in a safari film, with the rhinoceros. And Bye Bye Birdie. My mother would take me to see James Bond films, Goldfinger and Dr. No. I remember her taking me to see A Hard Day's Night.

PLAYBOY: Did you like that?

LEE: Yeah. I liked the Beatles when I was little. My father would turn down the radio when he came in the house.

PLAYBOY: He didn't like the Beatles?

LEE: He didn't like no music besides jazz. [*Shouts*] "Turn that bad music off!"

PLAYBOY: Did you always know you were going to college?

LEE: Yeah. I mean, what else was I gonna do? My father and my grandfather, they went to college, so it was there for me too. What else would I do, work at a McDonald's? Go work for somebody else? I never thought about rebellin', not goin' to college. It was what I was gonna do.

PLAYBOY: You sound like you were a practical kid, not a troublemaker.

LEE: I grew up as the oldest, so I had to be practical. The oldest child has to take care of the younger kids. They're always the most practical.

PLAYBOY: What was your relationship with the kids in the neighborhood?

LEE: I was always a leader. I was the one organizing stuff.

PLAYBOY: Did you like school as a kid?

LEE: Not really.

PLAYBOY: Did you do well?

LEE: Just good enough to get by.

PLAYBOY: Which must not have made your mother too happy, since she was a teacher.

LEE: She was always on me. I'd get an 80 and I'd be happy, but she'd be like, "Well, you shouldn't be content with an 80. Them Jewish kids are getting 95." [*Laughs*] But she was right.

PLAYBOY: Do you wonder what it would be like if you were growing up now?

LEE: It would be frightening, with the violence and the access to weapons and guns, and the drugs. Before, we used to be terrified if we even saw somebody taking a puff on a joint. But now, if you're a parent, you pray to God that's all your child is doing is smoking marijuana.

PLAYBOY: Do you think there's a lack of emphasis on education now?

LEE: Right. Half of the young black males here in New York City don't even finish high school. But this is not to say that I'm blaming them. I'm not trying to point a finger at the victim. I think that the educational system has failed. At the same time, I've never been one just to blame white people for everything, for all of our ills. We have to take some responsibility. If stuff's going to be corrected, it's up to us. It's up to the parents. What are these kids doing outside late at night? Eight years old and hanging out later than I am. Running in the streets at two, three, four in the morning. Where are their parents?

When we were growing up, people looked out after each other. Other parents could tell you something. If somebody else's mother saw you doing something wrong, that mother would treat you as if you were her child.

PLAYBOY: But you also got straightened out in school, right?

LEE: Yeah. I think that discipline, that's what's really lacking. I'm not saying let's go back to the Dark Ages when they were hitting kids in school with rulers, but discipline is really lacking.

PLAYBOY: Does it make you leery of having a family?

LEE: No, not really at all. When I do have a family, I don't want to send them to private school, because I feel that's too sheltered.

PLAYBOY: Even given the problems with the educational system?

LEE: I will be able to get my kids in the best public schools here. I mean, there are good public schools here, but there aren't that many. I went to public school, my brother Chris went to public school. But David, Joie and Cinque went to private school. I always could tell a difference in them because they went to private school. Their negritude got honed or harnessed going into these predominantly white private schools. That's where my mother was teaching.

PLAYBOY: Do you talk about this?

LEE: They know it. Most of their friends were white. Not that I have anything against that, it's just that there is definitely an argument for being around your own people.

PLAYBOY: A lot of the parents who send their kids to private schools today went to public schools themselves. They fear their children won't get a good education or be safe at a public school.

LEE: They're justified in thinking that. People are getting shot and stabbed in school. That's not supposed to happen in a school.

PLAYBOY: Did your mother try to keep you away from the bad kids in the neighborhood?

LEE: No. There were never any gangs. I don't remember ever seeing any. There were people who would steal your lunch money, but that wasn't no gang thing. I mean, now they'll shoot you. When I was growing up, they might take a quarter from you. You give it up.

PLAYBOY: Or fight.

LEE: Yeah, but it's not like "Give us your leather coat or I'll shoot you."

PLAYBOY: Since the educational system is so bad, why should kids be unemployed college grads when they could sell crack and make a lot of money?

LEE: That is something that is going to have to be dealt with, the economics. Forget about the moral issue, even though it should play into it. It's not going to weigh when these kids are faced with the fact of making minimum wage at McDonald's or making three and four thousand a week selling crack. Not everybody, but a lot of them are going to sell that crack and make that money. You're not thinking about how you might end up dead, eventually, or end up in jail. That's not the point. Now you can buy that BMW or whatever. Gold chains and gold teeth. Kangols and Kazals.

PLAYBOY: Where do you think that materialism comes from?

LEE: Well, when people don't have anything, they have to try and show they do have something. And you show that by what you wear or the car you drive. "I'm not like all the rest of these poor niggers. I got something."

PLAYBOY: Don't some black kids view education itself as white?

LEE: There's something very sick where if you speak well and you speak articulately, that's looked at as being negative and speaking white. I remember when I was growing up, people used to tell me, "You sound white." I've been reading of various cases where kids flunk on purpose so they'll be considered "down" with the home boys and stuff. That's crazy when intelligence is thought of as being white and all the other stuff is being black and being down. I think that one has to be able to navigate both worlds. You ought to be able to speak with your brothers on the street but at the same time be able to go to a job interview, fill out the application and speak proper English. You've got to have both. I don't think it makes you any less black by being articulate.

PLAYBOY: Where do you think that attitude comes from?

LEE: I think all this stuff you could really trace to our hatred of ourselves. Everything we do, eventually, if you keep going back far enough, you'll see that we've been taught to hate ourselves. And until we stop that, all this other shit we're doing is just going to continue to happen.

PLAYBOY: Comedian Franklyn Ajaye said that one of the things he didn't like about In Living Color when he was a writer there was that everybody talked like they were down. He didn't see any kind of reflection of articulate black life in the show, and that bothered him.

LEE: Me and Keenen [Ivory Wayans] talked about it. He was on the cover of New York magazine, and in the article, they said they had 13 writers and only three or four were black. The rest were all these Jewish kids that went to Harvard. So I just asked Keenen what's up. He explained to me all he's done for black people, as far as the show is concerned. I'm not going to dispute that. I'm not saying it's because they did the skit on me, but if you have some white kid from Harvard joking about Malcolm X—Lax—I don't

think that shit is funny. I don't think they'd allow a black person to make a joke about Golda Meir.

PLAYBOY: Do you think being educated means that you're not black?

LEE: In a perverse kind of way. Everything has been kind of turned upside down. I think we've just got a lot of things turned around.

PLAYBOY: When did that happen?

LEE: A lot of things happened after the civil rights movement, where we thought we were making strides and progress. Somewhere from the end of the Sixties up to now, we got off the path. Or we were led off the path. I think that we really haven't advanced a lot. For me, the biggest problem is that people get tricked. Because of the visibility of a couple of African Americans who are able to split through, mostly in entertainment or the sports industry, it gives off the perception that black people have made great strides and that everything is all right. But the reality is, we're not all right. You look at all the black people who are dying of cancer, hypertension, AIDS. The permanently unemployed. The black underclass now is larger than it's ever been. But people are tricked into not really taking that stuff into account. I'm not blaming these people. They're tricked because they see Oprah Winfrey, they see Bill Cosby, they see Spike Lee, they see Eddie Murphy, they see Michael Jordan, they see Bo Jackson, Paula Abdul, M.C. Hammer, Janet Jackson, Arsenio Hall. But we're just a couple of people. We were the exception, not the rule. We were able to slide through that microscopic crack that was open for a second.

PLAYBOY: Is it because you think there are so many visible black people that—

LEE: Wait. If you look at the context of all the shows that are on TV and all the movies that are made, and then look at the percent, it's not that many. It's just the perception that there's a lot of us.

PLAYBOY: Based on that perception and the fact that you can say there may be more successful, visible black people than ever, the perception is that—

LEE: We've arrived. And that's not the case at all. I mean, there's not one person outside of Eddie Murphy, really, not one African American in Hollywood who can green-light a picture. Who can say, "I want this picture made," and that's it.

PLAYBOY: You can't get that done?

LEE: No matter what? For me to get a film made, I have to present a script, and they either do it or they don't. But every studio has people who are the guardians of the gate. They're the ones who say this picture gets made and this picture doesn't. And there are no black people in that position in Hollywood. I mean, we're getting ready to have a big fight with the Teamsters here in New York because they don't have no black people. We used the Teamsters on Do the Right Thing, Mo' Better and Jungle Fever, and the amount that we paid for the Teamsters for all three films is like three quarters of a million dollars. And there are only three or four black Teamsters in the whole union, here in New York. I refuse to give money to organizations that are openly into hiring practices that may exclude blacks. So we're about to go toe to toe with them on Malcolm X.

PLAYBOY: You're not going to use them?

LEE: If they don't get some more black people in it, they can kiss our ass. We told them that. They even refused to sit down with us and meet. They said, "We will let no one dictate to us who to hire."

PLAYBOY: So they deny any discriminatory practices?

LEE: The Teamsters, man, it's predominantly Irish. This particular branch I'm talking about here in New York. The Teamsters who work on movies.

PLAYBOY: How long have you been talking to them about this? Since you started to use them?

LEE: Yeah. They've been appeasing us. They might give us one or two, but we told them we wanted a black Teamster captain and we wanted five black people to get their books. They trick you sometimes. Let me not use the word trick, but they might put black people on your film, but they don't have their books. Meaning they're not full-fledged members of the union and don't receive the full benefits of the union. If you're a Teamster here in New York, they have the best benefits of any union in the country. Any of their children, they can go to college—free. Whatever college you choose. The union will pay for it.

PLAYBOY: And there are just a handful of black people in the union?

LEE: A handful. I mean, they just admitted one who got his book recently. But the last time one got admitted before that was 1962. There's too much money being made. I refuse to give money to an organization like that that's just so overtly racist in their hiring practices.

PLAYBOY: There is obviously now a big trend toward trying to increase the African-American inclusion in the movie mainstream. We've heard that people are already expecting a backlash. Remember when The Wit and Ragtime failed—

LEE: That was it. They said, "Black people don't support these films. Let's stop making black films." The blame was never put on Sidney Lumet, or the score, or the casting of Diana Ross. That is not to disrespect any of them, but the blame was put solely on "black people who failed to support this film." Whereas, if a white film doesn't work, it would be the director or whoever.

PLAYBOY: In some ways, there seems to be a renaissance of black participation in popular culture. There's you and Robert Townsend, In Living Color and the enormous effect of rap.

LEE: Yeah, that's true. They've finally realized black people contribute, and black audiences are a power in the entertainment market. Studios know there's just too much money to be made now from black audiences. And that people wanna see us, too.

PLAYBOY: Do you worry that history will repeat itself?

LEE: I think that this is a very crucial time. Every film studio, if you're black and even look like you're a director, they're signing you. And it's very important that all these people who are getting opportunities really be serious. I'm not trying to speak like I'm the grandfather of black cinema. But I think that there are a lot of people who are getting deals now—and more power to them—but I don't know if they're going to last. They just think that you can just walk off the street and direct a movie—and it is not true. This ain't just no bullshit; "Well, I'm just directing a film. I don't need to know nothing about film grammar or film history," or any other thing that one needs to know to become a film director.

"You think I'm happy black men are dying over shoes? Hell, no! Hell, no! I'm upset about it too."

PLAYBOY: You talked about being attacked for the Nola Darling character in She's Gotta Have It. Do you think you're becoming more enlightened about your portrayals of women?

LEE: This is something I've known all along. Every filmmaker has a weakness, just like athletes.

PLAYBOY: But we're not talking about every filmmaker.

LEE: No, I'm saying every filmmaker, every athlete has weaknesses. If you come into the league hitting 50 percent at the free-throw line, you've got to do something about your foul shooting if you want to be a complete ballplayer. My female characters were something I needed to work on. It was lacking. It's something I've tried to concentrate on.

PLAYBOY: We always thought one of the interesting things about Nola was that she lived her life the way she wanted to.

LEE: Yeah, but that wasn't the only film where they talked about the female characters. School Daze—they weren't as multidimensional as the male characters. There weren't enough of them in Do the Right Thing. And in Mo' Better, all they wanted was the man; they didn't have a life of their own—which I don't agree with for that particular film.

PLAYBOY: How does this affect your personal relationships? Do women have preconceived notions about you?

LEE: I don't really think you can break that question down to a sex thing, as far as male-female. I think that's just in general. Any time you're out in the public eye, people, when they meet you in person, they expect you to live up to that expectation of what that persona is. A lot of people expect me to be more animated, and they're kind of disappointed. "I didn't know you were quiet." So that really has nothing to do with male-female.

PLAYBOY: What about your relationships with white people? It's clear that a lot of white people are afraid of you.

LEE: I guess you fear stuff you don't understand. I don't think any white folks have anything to fear from me.

PLAYBOY: Still, almost all of the movie industry is white. All they ever see are other white people.

LEE: With a small smattering of Jewish people. [Laughs] I don't know why some Jewish people get upset when you say that there are a lot of Jewish people in the movie industry. That's the truth. That's like saying there are blacks in the N.B.A. That's not making a judgment, that's just a fact.

PLAYBOY: Do they really get sensitive when you say there are lots of Jews in the industry?

LEE: Yeah. The New York Times, there was this whole black-Jewish Hollywood thing. It was sparked by the convention the NAACP had in Hollywood where they said that Hollywood is racist and so on, and that it was run predominantly by Jewish people.

PLAYBOY: You must get a lot of calls whenever something like that happens.

LEE: Hooo, from around the world! The phone rings off the hook at our office. I think that this is what happens when the media appoints their so-called spokesperson for black people. This is something I have never wanted to achieve. It's not something I've chased after. And, for the most part, I don't say anything. But there are instances where stuff has to be spoken on. But, for the most part, I only answer about five percent of their questions.

PLAYBOY: What do you think about the future for African Americans?

LEE: If you look at the eight years of Reagan and maybe another eight of Bush, and the way they're dismantling affirmative action and all that stuff we fought for and died for, or the Supreme Court that's being appointed—Bush tried to pull this thing where it's discriminatory for schools to have scholarships for black students, and then they get this Uncle Tom handkerchief-head Negro to announce it as assistant secretary [of the Education Department]. Nobody even heard of this motherfucker, but the moment that this program has to be implemented and an announcement has to be made, they pull this Negro off the shelf. How are we supposed to go to school? It's a shame that we've still got Uncle Toms like this around. That guy should be beat with a Louisville Slugger in an alley. He got used. That's the only reason why they hired him, for something specific like that that was going to affect black people. So by the Bush Administration having this black person make this announcement, it can't be racist—we got a black person saying it.

PLAYBOY: Do you wonder if there has been some complacency since the civil rights movement?

LEE: I think America just really arrived at the point where it said, Look—and I think the mandate was handed down by Reagan—where it said, Look, we are tired of you niggers. You've got about as much as you're gonna get from us, and that's it. Period.

PLAYBOY: Some black people say they don't want special consideration.

LEE: Special? I don't think it's special, the fact that we were brought here as slaves and we've been robbed of our heritage and everything else. I mean, I don't consider that special.

PLAYBOY: So we take it you don't have much truck with black conservatives.

LEE: They'll sell you out in a minute. They sold us out. I mean, they're trying to make a big deal out of this what's-his-name, Colin Powell.

PLAYBOY: You don't think that he's a formidable figure? He's the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—that shows black progress, doesn't it?

LEE: So what? So we've got a black general that's going to be head of the Army that kills black people in Panama? Kills black people in Nicaragua? People of color in the Middle East? How come every war now is against people of color in Third World countries? They talk about fighting for democracy: Is South Africa democratic? I know it would be too farfetched to ask Bush to send troops into South Africa to fight for black people, so let's not talk about that. But how about sanctions? He's trying to lift the mother-fucking sanctions! Saddam does not compare to what De Klerk and all them crooks down there in South Africa are doing and have been doing. But they're white, so it's not perceived as that.

PLAYBOY: So you think it's another instance of racism?

LEE: Yes. I'm not going to say that Saddam might not be a maniac, but if you just study the way the press portrays Noriega, Ortega, Hussein, the ayatollah and the way they portray people like Botha, De Klerk, Cecil Rhodes—I mean, it's the difference between night and day. I have to give in, they have a point on Hitler and Mussolini, but since World War II, there is a difference in the way they portray dictators.

PLAYBOY: But look at the way the Soviets were portrayed.

LEE: That was really during the Cold War. They didn't send no troops into Lithuania and shit. They bogarted that country the same way that Hussein bogarted Kuwait. For me, the United States is not on the moral ground to judge anybody, because it's the most hypocritical country in the world. So, to me, they really can't say shit about nobody, because they got a lot of shit with themselves.

PLAYBOY: Do you think that after the civil rights movement lost its figureheads—Martin Luther King and Malcolm X—it lost momentum?

LEE: It did, but that's a mistake of putting emphasis on personality and people instead of the movement. As long as we continue to do that and make cults around our leaders, all they have to do to stop it any time we're making ground is just kill us off, kill off that leader.

PLAYBOY: What have you learned in your research for the Malcolm X movie?

LEE: That Malcolm was a very complex person. There were three or four different Malcolms. He was constantly evolving, his outlook and his ideology, and always trying to seek the truth. If he found it, he was not scared of being called a hypocrite. If he found a higher truth, he would say, "I was wrong. All that stuff I said before is wrong, and this is what I believe." That's something that very few people do.

PLAYBOY: Have your feelings about him changed since you started doing the research?

LEE: I think that I've really grown to love Malcolm more. What he stood for and what he died for.

PLAYBOY: What did you think when you first read his autobiography?

LEE: It was just a revelation. I have deep respect for Dr. King, but I've always been drawn more to Malcolm. I just cannot get with Dr. King's complete nonviolence philosophy.

PLAYBOY: Malcolm was moving in that direction himself, wasn't he?

LEE: No. Malcolm never moved away from defending oneself, the right to protect the self. He never moved away from that. Malcolm would never say, "Go to a march, get hit upside the head, and hopefully, after you get enough knocked upside the head, the white man will see how evil he is and will stop." He never said that, and he was never moving toward that. He's always been about the right to protect oneself. Malcolm never advocated violence. He said one should reserve the right to protect oneself.

PLAYBOY: Doesn't it seem interesting that there has finally come a time when a major studio will give you—

LEE: Yeah, 20 years and more since he's been dead and buried. He no longer seems such a threat. This film would not have been done in 1966, the year after he got assassinated. No way.

PLAYBOY: But look at what you get a chance to do now.

LEE: It's a great opportunity.

PLAYBOY: Are you up for it?

LEE: Yeah. Everything I've done has really prepared me for this film. It's led me in this direction. I've got no intention of dropping the ball.

SHE IS THE MOMENT

Victoria Zdrok

Instagram **@supermodelvictoria**

Photographer **Joshua Paull | @jpaullphoto**

What part of your journey are you most proud of right now? I am proud to have been in the glamour modeling industry for over 30 years now and considered to be the most published nude model of all time. When I posed for Playboy in my late teens, I never thought I would still be worthy in my 50s! I was the youngest model when I became the first Soviet Playmate, Miss October 1994. I went on to model for Playboy for a decade, doing Newstand Specials, catalogues and videos, and becoming Reader's Choice Supermodel in 1998. Then I went on to pose for Penthouse and became Pet of the Year 2004 as well as their columnist and editor. I also appeared on the covers of almost every men's magazine, including Gallery, Club, Leg Show, Hustler, and Mayfair, and many others. I retired for a while to raise my children, and now I am back. While modeling, I pursued my education and received a JD in law and a PhD in clinical psychology. I had written many books on sex and dating advice, and I had my own radio show on the Howard Stern channel. So I have led a very exciting life. I also have three wonderful children, and my two daughters are also models.

Any exciting projects lined up this year? Exciting projects: I had a thriving practice as a psychologist, which I had to curtail during the pandemic, and that's when I started my OnlyFans. I have a number of exciting shoots and collabs planned this year for my http://www.onlyfans.com/legendaryplaymate and my website http://www.PlayPetVictoria.com.

How would you describe your lifestyle in three words right now? Lifestyle: I have always been interested in health and fitness, but lately I have really stepped up my efforts to lead a healthy lifestyle. Now I am deep into biohacking and life extension practices. So my lifestyle can be described as: healthy, mindful, and enlightened. Lifestyle change: I started turning off my phone and all electronics an hour before bed for digital detox, and reading while listening to white noise it has considerably improved my sleep.

What's one lesson I have learned: You cannot speak for your Future Self. You really don't know when you are 20 years old what your 50 year old self will want, feel, crave, or be like. When I became a mother, I thought I would never want to model again, but as my children grew older, I missed being in front of the camera. Life is an exciting and unpredictable journey.

Hobby: I have always loved kayaking, and recently I have gotten a clear kayak and started driving and exploring new lakes around me. It's a great way to connect with nature and experience digital detox.

Guilty pleasure: dark chocolate with nuts - I particularly love macadamias and hazelnuts.

What makes me the ultimate partner? I am very giving and affectionate - I believe in lots of physical touch, hugs, hand holding, sensual massages, spooning, and cuddling. I am also known to be a great kisser.

When people look back at this moment in your career, what do you hope it represents about who you are? When people look back at my career, I am known as the Porn Unicorn - the intellectual Playmate who combined beauty, brains, and brawn.

What's one goal you didn't hit last year that you're determined to achieve this time? What's one goal I want to achieve: I want to get into the Guiness Record as the nude model with the longest career. What goals: I am working on a guide to glamour modeling, which I hope will help young women who are just getting into the industry.

What advice would you give to someone learning to step into their confidence? What confidence advice: Fake it till you make it! What your mind perceives, your mind believes - so even if you don't feel confident, act like you are and you will project confidence. Assume the Super Woman power pose for a few minutes before the photoshoot with shoulders back, head high, and hands on your hips - research shows it gets us into the confidence mode. Work on your posture and confident gate. And when you pose, always point your toes as hard as you can - it elongates the body for a more elegant look.

Where can our readers catch up with you and stay updated with your work? Where to catch up: I love chatting with my admirers on my OnlyFans, my insta and my TikTok. My insta is @supermodelvictoria, my TikTok is @doczdrok.

Playboy Interview
Jim Carrey

A candid conversation with Hollywood's most serious-minded funny guy about spirituality, drugs, denial and how "The Truman Show" became reality

BY **MICHAEL FLEMING** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DAVID ROSE**

With his head and his face bearing equal amounts of stubble, Jim Carrey arrives at his production company's office. He has just shaved his skull for a new role, and dressed in a black suit and white shirt he looks like a happy, prosperous monk. But the name on the door—Pit Bull Productions—reveals far more about Carrey's true nature.

Born in Toronto, Carrey had an uneventful childhood as the son of an accountant and a homemaker—until Dad lost his job and the family was left homeless and miserable. Carrey dropped out of school in 10th grade and worked at menial jobs to help out. He found better pay doing impressions on the stand-up comedy circuit. His harmless, permanently smiling persona translated to roles in such films as Peggy Sue Got Married and the short-lived TV series The Duck Factory.

The earlier hard times, however, had instilled anger and an edge in Carrey that eventually came out. Mindful that his father had been fired from a seemingly safe job, Carrey tossed out the mainstream act that had him opening for Rodney Dangerfield. He replaced it with a caustic, manic persona who went onstage without a set routine and punished his audience until

it responded—sometimes with laughter, sometimes with debris. Keenen Ivory Wayans saw the edge as a strong match for his envelope-pushing Fox sketch show In Living Color and made Carrey the lone white male cast member in 1990.

Carrey scored a surprise hit as Ace Ventura: Pet Detective and followed that with The Mask in 1994, another blockbuster, which instantly drove his price from $500,000 to $7 million a film. When Robin Williams vacillated on playing the Riddler in Batman Forever, Carrey jumped into the green suit and had his first global hit. Next: a record $20 million to star in the 1996 film The Cable Guy.

Hardly content to be a rich guy who makes faces and talks out of his ass, Carrey rolled the dice again. His edgy Cable Guy villain darkened the film's tone enough to horrify studio execs (and audiences, who stayed away in droves). Still, the performance helped Carrey take a step toward serious films. In The Truman Show he played the unwitting star of a 24-hours-a-day reality TV show. Carrey then played quirky comic Andy Kaufman in Man on the Moon.

The problem: Those serious turns seriously underperformed at the box office. In fact, 2001's The Majestic was enough of a bomb for people to start writing Carrey's career epitaph. The death notices were shelved when Carrey put on his funny hat again and delivered last year's top-grossing comedy, Bruce Almighty. What's an ambitious megastar to do? For Carrey the answer is to take the serious route yet again in his new film, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, a surreal drama about memory erasing that was written by Charlie Kaufman, architect of Being John Malkovich and Adaptation.

Michael Fleming sat down with Carrey just as he began working on the role of Count Olaf, the signature villain in the film Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events, an adaptation of Daniel Handler's kidbook series. The twice-divorced (most recently from actress Lauren Holly), now single Carrey was clearly getting into character. He seemed tightly coiled, partly because he doesn't like doing interviews and partly because he had decided to explain certain aspects of his personal life that he'd never talked about before—and he wasn't sure how his fans might react.

"Try to find a comic who isn't angry when he's 70. Why is George Carlin pissed off? He's brilliant."

PLAYBOY: You've been working around the clock on your new film, and you've just shaved your head. Are you feeling overwhelmed?
CARREY: Not today. I just came off the beach in Malibu, near my house. It was the most beautiful day, except for that inevitable paparazzi triangulation.
PLAYBOY: Your Truman Show character has no privacy. Now, with the paparazzi following you, the same has happened to you.
CARREY: This country is getting us ready for The Truman Show. It's happening I feel a little scared and sad. They're slowly desensitizing us to where there's a video camera on every street corner. Shows on TV are getting more like, "Ha! What a stupid guy, that Joe Schmo or whoever he is."
PLAYBOY: The Truman Show seemed cautionary in 1998 but now seems prophetic. On The Joe Schmo Show everybody was an actor except the unaware contestant. Joe Millionaire's contestants were duped into falling in love with a phony millionaire.
CARREY: It's all unbelievably cruel. I believe in making fun of things that deserve to be made fun of—lies, arrogance. These are things you want to rip down as a comedian. But when you take a guy who's a good-hearted human and you just go "Woo, woo, woo" behind his head, it's cruel.
PLAYBOY: Even though they gave him a hundred grand?
CARREY: A hundred grand means nothing. What are you buying—his humiliation and misery? It feels as if we're just desensitizing people to the point where it will be all right to take a baby and do whatever you want with it. Or to kill somebody on camera.
PLAYBOY: Meanwhile, celebrities get more and more coverage. How do you feel when you see an E! show consisting totally of people like yourself being stalked by the paparazzi?
CARREY: Unacceptable. Way over the edge, man. That channel is now eating its young.
PLAYBOY: What do you say when they ask for an interview?
CARREY: I don't do it.
PLAYBOY: What about the argument that it's the price of being rich and famous?
CARREY: I don't think that argument holds water. We should respect the people who entertain us and make us feel good—unless I'm acting like an idiot, which I'm not. I know they justify it in their heads, but it can't make them feel good. Unless they're drunk or stoned and completely fogging over their feelings, I know that in their private moments, when they're lying in bed staring at the ceiling, they can't feel good about it. Taking is taking and giving is giving. Period. There will be a reckoning in their lives.
PLAYBOY: What do you mean?
CARREY: There will be some kind of unexplainable disease, something that happens in your life that makes you go, "Why me?" And I'm here to tell you, it's because of the choices you made.
PLAYBOY: So you believe in karma?
CARREY: Absolutely, without a doubt. But this isn't karma; this is the truth eating you alive. You can justify things all you want, but every human being knows the truth. To follow someone around with your lens like a little sneak—it hurts your spirit on this planet.
PLAYBOY: Do you feel this strongly because you see yourself as a victim?
CARREY: I just feel it as a human being. I'm always looking at myself. I'm in no way perfect, but I'm always challenging myself to try to be better—in what I eat and what I read. I've always thought that a higher level is possible, and I'm always looking for it.
PLAYBOY: When you played a guy with a split personality in Me, Myself & Irene, advocacy groups complained that you belittled the mentally ill. Isn't everyone guilty of insensitivity, even you?
CARREY: I wasn't trying to be insensitive at all. To me it was like a cartoon. I don't want anybody to be hurt by what I do. If that in some way hurt somebody, I'd feel terrible. But it wasn't intentional. Maybe that's the difference: I was being funny.
PLAYBOY: Do you understand the appeal of E! and other celebrity coverage?

CARREY: I'm not completely innocent here. I've indulged in it too. I watch those shows sometimes, but I know it's a disease. It's leading us down the wrong road, man.

PLAYBOY: You've done more than watch these shows. Before Man on the Moon came out, the media reported that, in character as Andy Kaufman, you got into a fight with Andy's wrestling nemesis, Jerry Lawler. Wasn't that a calculated press stunt to boost awareness for a movie that needed visibility?

CARREY: I'm not really allowed to tell you what happened, so either way I'm screwed. I think an interesting byproduct was seeing how little had to happen to put the media into high gear—helicopters flying over the building, top story across the country. I sat in a hotel room watching and said, "Andy lives."

PLAYBOY: You talk about the entertainment media as if it were pornography.

CARREY: I don't know what my attitude toward porn is. I've studied a lot of Taoism. It talks about trying to find a higher place and not wasting your sexual essence, how these Chinese guys live to be 120 because they don't waste their essence. They might have sex, but they don't waste it all the time. I guess if you're going to squander your chi, the pages of Playboy are as good a place as any.

PLAYBOY: Squander your chi?

CARREY: There's a quote for you: Go ahead and squander your chi. But I guarantee you heaven isn't in Miss March's pussy. Sure, it looks good; it feels good. I have nothing against it.

PLAYBOY: Wait—are you telling us you're celibate?

CARREY: Oh, no. I don't believe in that. I do believe in staying in balance. I'm not celibate, and I do masturbate. But not like a fiend. I believe in moderation. I think there's an energy source. It's like anything else: You can't eat cake all day long or you waste your energy. And you get gray, lose vitality. And I'm really good at sex.

PLAYBOY: You are?

CARREY: Nah, I just thought I'd put that out there.

PLAYBOY: If heaven isn't sex, where is it?

"I'm not celibate, and I do masturbate. But not like a fiend. I believe in moderation. It's like anything: You can't eat cake all day long or you waste your energy. You get gray, lose vitality. And I'm really good at sex."

CARREY: Heaven is on the other side of that feeling you get when you're sitting on the couch and you get up and make a triple-decker sandwich. It's on the other side of that, when you don't make the sandwich. It's about sacrifice.

PLAYBOY: So it's about not indulging.

CARREY: It's about giving up the things that basically keep you from feeling. That's what I believe, anyway. I'm always asking, "What am I going to give up next?" Because I want to feel. It's been my drive since I was a little kid, actually.

PLAYBOY: Name something you gave up that gave you comfort.

CARREY: I don't eat wheat, I don't eat dairy, I don't smoke cigarettes, I don't smoke pot. All these things I've enjoyed. I live very sparingly.

PLAYBOY: It sounds a little monastic.

CARREY: It is, a little bit. But I'm an experiment, you know? That's how I see life. I'm not trying to put myself higher than anybody or anything like that. But I am my own experiment, and I love that. Physical health to me is my hobby. Psychology and spiritual life fascinate me to no end. When everybody wants to go to a rave, I like nothing better than to go home and read my books and say some prayers and meditate and try to break through. I'm always trying to breakthrough.

PLAYBOY: For how long have you been abstaining from these creature comforts?

CARREY: I have been struggling to do it my entire life.

PLAYBOY: But you're a wealthy movie star—you're in a position to deny yourself comforts. Most people don't have that many comforts to begin with. They have overdue bills and abusive bosses.

CARREY: That's denial, man. That's like obese people lobbying to call their situation a disease. I don't believe it. God bless obese people, but they've got work to do.

PLAYBOY: So you've given up pot, too?

CARREY: I think people underestimate the power of things like marijuana, the addictive quality. It's not that the substance itself is addictive; it's the stimulation of the pleasure center of your brain. It becomes an easy way out, an instant vacation. That's addictive. I know people who have been stoned every day of their lives, for 50 years. They seem fine, but they are not getting to a higher level.

PLAYBOY: Like who?

CARREY: I hung out at the Comedy Store with Richard Pryor and people who struggled when they wanted to do it straight. I stood in a parking lot one night with Richard when he said, "I don't remember. I don't remember 40 years. I don't feel like I did it." And of course he did it. But that's the trick. You can do it without that stuff. You don't need it if creativity becomes your high.

PLAYBOY: You're telling us that when you're in your big house alone you don't sometimes think, Screw it, I'm going to eat a gallon of ice cream?

CARREY: I have moments. But mostly I stay on my thing. I might have one day a week when I go off and have a glass of wine. I'm not completely dogmatic. But I keep honing this thing, this experiment. I fear that 90 percent of people are going to look at this and think, He's turning into a head case. I'm not. This is about my not wanting anything halfway.

PLAYBOY: You must have splurged somewhere.

CARREY: I've never been really decadent. Honestly, I don't put a lot of onus on the things in my life. I have things. I try to keep my life fairly simple. I have a plane, and that's an incredible luxury. But it mainly saves me so much stress because I travel so much.

PLAYBOY: Your own plane? That's a big comfort. How does that save stress?

CARREY: Not having to deal with the airports and the paparazzi, all that is involved with an airport. It's a worth-while investment in my peace of mind. I'm all about keeping myself in a healthy place so that I can go the duration, man. I want to make it to 120 years old. I've got a date to run a 10k on the Great Wall of China when I'm 90.

PLAYBOY: Some people might say that this is just a fad—that during the next round of interviews for a movie you'll be pounding a Big Mac and supersizing.

CARREY: Or drunk at the Oscars, holding my genitals? I'd never say never, but if I was doing that at McDonald's, I'd just get back

on my thing. I always have. Each time I go off and have one of those moments, it's a shorter span of time before I get back on my game. I don't promise anybody that I'm perfect. This is just my experiment.

PLAYBOY: Do your friends think, Gosh, Jim, you're not as much fun to hang with since you've turned into this Amish guy?

CARREY: I'm not as much fun for somebody who just wants to get wasted. I'm too confrontational to be around. But I don't judge people. You want to get wasted? I'll pass it to you. Here you go. You're your own judge. I don't want to judge anybody.

PLAYBOY: You came up alongside comics who became stars and were overcome by excess. After John Belushi became a movie star, people around him wouldn't let him have a bad moment even if it meant feeding him drugs.

CARREY: That's bullshit. It was his fault. John Belushi was a strong-willed motherfucker who'd kick your ass if you told him how to live. This is the mistake people make. Why couldn't someone talk to Elvis? Well, good luck. You were out the door if you did. It's this habit we have of shirking our responsibility to ourselves.

PLAYBOY: Many comics, such as Sam Kinison, seemed to work best when they were standing on the edge of a precipice.

CARREY: Sam was in total denial. He created a beast he couldn't get away from. I'm not saying that's ultimately what happened to him. But I know his struggle. He was always going back and forth. He'd come up to me and go, "Hey, Jim! We're drug-free Christians, man." We'd laugh because I was always trying to be straight and healthy. Then he'd go on Howard Stern, and Howard would say, "You know, you're not funny when you're not stoned." And he'd be right back doing it again. And this is the trouble—when you create the beast, you've got to be the beast, you know? I've got enough of a beast in me, man.

"John Belushi was a strong-willed motherfucker who'd kick your ass if you told him how to live. It was his fault. This is the mistake people make. It's this habit we have of shirking our responsibility to ourselves."

PLAYBOY: You are a perfectionist. Does this come at a high personal cost?

CARREY: Sometimes I hate it. Sometimes I don't want to do it. Especially things like this. I twist for three days before I sit down and talk to somebody like you. How do I try to speak my truth in an interview like this, to describe this trip that I'm on, without coming off like a self-important asshole?

PLAYBOY: You just say what's on your mind and take your chances. People will respond, or they won't.

CARREY: I'm trying to make sure that I'm a lion who likes to act like a monkey and not a monkey who likes to act like a lion. Don't ask me to explain it.

PLAYBOY: You shaved your head for Lemony Snicket. Why not put on a skin wig?

CARREY: I don't mind being a bit of a freak while I'm doing a movie. It gives me an excuse. It keeps life interesting. It scares me a little bit sometimes, because it puts me in a certain place that bangs up against where I want to be in my life spiritually. When you try to live a good life, one of the things you don't concentrate on is "How will I be self-loathing today? How will I hate God's creation?"

PLAYBOY: Did taking on the roles of Andy Kaufman and his alter ego, Tony Clifton, take a toll?

CARREY: Oddly enough, that one energized me. I was so lost in that character that I wasn't myself. I looked at it like this: Let's not be an actor doing Andy Kaufman's life story. Let's be Andy Kaufman coming back from the dead to do his life story. When I came out of it, it was as if I'd had a vacation from being Jim Carrey. I didn't think as I think, I didn't act as I act, I didn't make choices as Jim Carrey. I had gone off the planet. It was probably how you feel when you die—you just go, "Ahhh, what a rest."

PLAYBOY: It's remarkable that you could lose yourself so completely.

CARREY: It was actually spooky at the end. I had to sit for about three weeks and ask, "What do I believe again?" I lost track of my own likes and dislikes. I do know that it's possible to program your brain. It really is. I've done it my whole life. Everything I have is because of a constant kind of brainwashing that I've done to myself.

PLAYBOY: You have been prescient. You wrote a postdated $10 million check to yourself when you were poor, and when the date came up you had the money to cover it. You told yourself you were going to be one of the five biggest actors in Hollywood, that every major director would someday want to work with you.

CARREY: Is working with me.

PLAYBOY: So you consider this approach to be pretty successful?

CARREY: The whole thing is all good brainwashing. Not "I'm going to do this," but rather "I am doing this." I've always said it in the present moment, as if it already exists. I may not be connected to it yet, but it exists. When people ask me about an Oscar, I try to be polite about it. But I've already won it. In my head I've won Best Actor.

PLAYBOY: For which role?

CARREY: I don't know what the role is. I want that to surprise me. I'm not being arrogant. I don't have some sense of entitlement. It's just that I've experienced it already. I just work this way.

PLAYBOY: Does that block out fear?

CARREY: It just seems to program the computer. If it's God's will as well, then it'll happen and connect with my thought. I fit's not, it won't.

PLAYBOY: What goals are you programming now?

CARREY: I have four more things in my wallet right now.

PLAYBOY: What are they?

CARREY: I can't tell you.

PLAYBOY: Come on, give us one.

CARREY: No. That's between me and God.

PLAYBOY: Are they professional or personal?

CARREY: They're career things, they're life things, they're spiritual things—they're everything.

PLAYBOY: You're not gearing for a run for governor of California, are you?

CARREY: Let's hope not. No, everybody would be in a lot of trouble if I did. I may do it in the movies, just so I can say what

I need to say.

PLAYBOY: You come from Canada but have talked about becoming a dual citizen so you can vote.

CARREY: I'm in the process.

PLAYBOY: Would you have voted for Arnold Schwarzenegger?

CARREY: I like Arnold. I have no idea how qualified he is. The whole power of celebrity in this country scares me, the idea that we trust this guy and feel we know him because he's in a movie. If he mentions his frigging movies one more time in one of his speeches, I'm going to vomit. Dude, you're a politician now—speak about the issues. There is something dark and evil going on in the Republican Party that's just too frightening to get into.

PLAYBOY: Care to elaborate?

CARREY: I love this country. I came here from Canada with huge dreams, and America gave me everything I ever imagined and more. But I think we're in a lot of trouble. There's a lot of stuff that's going to hurt us. We might wake up one day and go, "Wait, we're the bad guy?" We've got to be careful.

PLAYBOY: You mean the invasion of Iraq?

CARREY: I mean everything. Our business overseas. How we treat each other. Insensitivity to people, to other races and countries. God knows I feel for our soldiers. It breaks my heart that people are dying, and I appreciate that they protect us. But I wonder how far that $87 billion might have gone in showing goodwill to the rest of the world had we taken it and said, "How can we help you?" We might have won the hearts and minds of the Arab people.

I just hope Bush and those behind him have their hearts in the right place. We're there now. We have to see it through. If their hearts aren't in the right place and this is about oil, there's no bunker thick enough or deep enough to get away from God's bunker buster. I also believe we should stop writing cute messages on bombs. It isn't funny—it's cruel, and it doesn't do the soldiers any good. If we're going to write anything on a bomb, it should be "God bless whoever this lands on and may God forgive us all, on both sides."

"If Arnold Schwarzenegger mentions his frigging movies one more time in one of his speeches, I'm going to vomit. Dude, you're a politician now—speak about the issues."

PLAYBOY: Let's change the subject. When you started out as a stand-up comic, what was your goal?

CARREY: When I started I wanted to please my mom and dad.

PLAYBOY: Yet you abruptly scrapped your mainstream act as an impressionist and replaced it with something much edgier and more unpredictable.

CARREY: Oh, I'd have a war with the audience some nights. I'd go to war.

PLAYBOY: Why?

CARREY: I just felt like it was my mood at the time and it was dishonest to give them anything else. So I would go to the Comedy Store and pull the guns out and start firing.

PLAYBOY: Did you have a plan when you took the stage?

CARREY: Sometimes I had no plan at all. I went up six months in a row and told myself that I wouldn't repeat a word I'd said the night before. Every night was like death. I was bleeding with sweat before I'd go onstage, because I wouldn't allow myself to repeat a joke or a line. I went up there with nothing.

PLAYBOY: What was the reaction?

CARREY: The comics thought it was incredible. They were all lined up at the back of the room going, "Do you know what he's doing?" Kinison would say, "You're not going to save any of that shit, man? That was funny shit." And I'd go, "Nope. Not gonna do it." It was brutal, and two thirds of the time it was absolute shit. I got chairs thrown at me, and I got in fights.

PLAYBOY: You had the added pressure of supporting your parents and siblings. That must have been tough.

CARREY: Well, yeah. It was hard when I threw my impression act out completely.

PLAYBOY: Why do it then?

CARREY: Because when you juggle for five minutes, they call you a juggler. That's it. Now, since I've developed other things, I can bring an impression back—in Bruce Almighty I do Clint Eastwood. It's fun, but it's not who I am.

PLAYBOY: Who guided you when you made that transition?

CARREY: My dad was really instrumental in the creative decisions I made. He was a jazzman, an orchestra leader.

PLAYBOY: Your father was also an accountant who lost his job. Did that show you the downside of playing it safe?

CARREY: For him it was a combination of fear and responsibility. He was a very, very good man. But I used to think my dad was a coward.

PLAYBOY: Why?

CARREY: Because he was such a nice guy to everybody, and he got run over in life. He got fired when he was 50, and no one wanted him anymore. He was always the guy who would give you the shirt off his back, and I used to look at that and go, "That's not honest. It's not entirely honest to be the nice guy all the time."

PLAYBOY: Did you ever say that to him?

CARREY: Not really, no. It was who he was. He loved people and showed me nothing but love, and I could never look at that in a bad way. But you learn from your parents. What I learned was not just to give everybody everything they want. They don't know what they want. And they'll eat you up and spit you out without even meaning to.

PLAYBOY: What's the alternative?

CARREY: If I got into a place where I felt pigeonholed, I would do the opposite until everyone forgot what I used to do. That came from seeing how it turns out when you pander to people. You're asking to be kicked in the teeth.

PLAYBOY: You first made good money doing impressions as Rodney Dangerfield's opening act. Audiences liked you.

CARREY: I saw where it was going. I saw it leading to Vegas and opening for people. Or if you're Rich Little, you become the Impressionist Guy. God bless him, but it was not good for me. This soul is too big to be housed by that.

PLAYBOY: Dangerfield took you under his wing. What did you learn from him?

CARREY: More than anything, he supported my creative whims. When I stopped doing impressions and started spiking my hair

and doing weird things, he still hired me. He'd stand off to the side and laugh, and when I came off he'd say, "Man, those people think you're from another fucking planet." He's an incredible character. And he treated my father like gold, which was very important to me.

PLAYBOY: You've drawn clear lines about not discussing whom you date. Did you get burned?

CARREY: You do learn that if you're telling the truth it's going to piss somebody off. But the press knows. They know that the celebrities who stand in front of the paparazzi are, you know, half going, 'Just be cool. It's okay. This serves a purpose. It gets the publicity out," and half going, "These are the fucking people who follow me around! What am I doing?"

PLAYBOY: The attention defines some entertainers.

CARREY: Yeah, there definitely are people out there who would do anything to get some publicity. I'm not qualified to speak for everybody. I'm kind of in rarified air. The main thing is, I just don't believe in meanness.

PLAYBOY: Comedy is sometimes mean.

CARREY: Sometimes I trip into it as a comic, but I have trouble reconciling that, too. Try to find a comic who isn't angry when he's 70. Why is George Carlin pissed off? He's brilliant. But the man is so angry it's getting unnerving. It's like he practically doesn't want to live on this planet anymore. I try to understand why that's happening, because I don't want that. I want to be a loving human being. I want to look at the world with joy and gratitude and see the things that are good about life.

PLAYBOY: Your newest movie is Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, which is about a couple who have their relationship erased from their brains. Why did you do it?

CARREY: What drew me is the idea that everybody has someone they'd rather erase: "Gosh, if I could just suck that out of my brain and my heart and never deal with it again, it'd be fantastic." Everybody identifies with that, has some relationship that hurts so bad that they just wish they could make the ghosts go away. You can't, of course.

PLAYBOY: The hardships you and your family endured after your father lost his job have been well chronicled. Would you erase that pain?

CARREY: Well, there was only one time when I felt something really horrible was going on. That was when we were all doing the job at Titan Wheels [a tire manufacturer]. The whole family was working. My dad was doing the night shift, and I was doing afternoons and going to school in the daytime. I saw it changing us, making us hateful and bigoted. I empathize with kids who go to school and can't understand or don't want to understand what the teacher is saying. I was so angry then, I just wanted to bash someone's head in.

PLAYBOY: Seriously?

CARREY: Yeah. I used to carry a bat on my cleaning cart. This factory was half Jamaican and half Indian—you know, Sikhs. Everybody had daggers and knives, and it was like a race war going on. I was in the middle of it.

PLAYBOY: What did they do to make you so angry?

CARREY: They'd taunt me. They'd pile their chicken bones two feet high in the corner of the cafeteria because they knew I'd have to clean it up. Or they'd take a shit in the sink. Constantly trying to push my buttons to the point where I walked around with a cleaning cart and a baseball bat, just waiting for my opportunity to crack a skull. It was bad. I wanted to hurt somebody. I was caught up in anger. So I get how that feels. I understand.

PLAYBOY: Would you be who you are now without those experiences?

CARREY: It definitely gave me an edge. And I don't think anybody is interesting on-screen unless they have an edge of some kind. There's a reason Russell Crowe is popular, besides being an excellent actor. The guy is an edgy dude. And all of us kind of live vicariously through guys who can bust some heads for us. I think an edge is interesting to watch. To have that, you've got to risk.

PLAYBOY: In Living Color gave you your start, but it wasn't Saturday Night Live. Would you rather have done SNL?

CARREY: I never made it in the normal way everybody makes it. I tried out for Saturday Night Live. The day I auditioned I went over to NBC, and as I'm getting ready I'm going, "Am I meant to do this?" I got out of my car, and an NBC page was standing on the ledge on the 10th floor of the NBC building, trying to work up the nerve to kill himself. And I just went, "This isn't going to happen. This is not going to happen today." Because I read the universe all the time and generally get my answers real quick.

PLAYBOY: That could be taken as some kind of sign.

CARREY: Yeah, and all these news crews were coming out of the building. And this guy was shuffling toward the edge, trying to decide whether to kill himself or not.

PLAYBOY: Did he?

CARREY: I don't know. I never heard. I went in. So the whole time I was in there I was thinking, Is he dead? Did he die? But I never watched the news. I forgot about it. That's how desensitized I was. It was all about whether I was getting on the show or not.

PLAYBOY: On In Living Color you were known as the white guy. Did you have any idea who'd be the biggest success? Surely it wasn't going to be the Fly Girl named Jennifer Lopez.

CARREY: God bless her, man. She went for it. That's a driven woman. Unbelievable how well she has done. Incredible. But she's paying for it big-time, too. I didn't really have any notions about it, honestly. Sometimes I'd talk with Damon Wayans, who by year three had started getting opportunities and was on the way out of the show. He was tired a lot of the time, and I'd say to him, "But this is it, man! We made it already." I was aware that this was a rung on the ladder, but I wanted to enjoy it. What if it wasn't? What if this was as high as I was going? So I worked it to the very last show. Probably a little desperately.

PLAYBOY: You've convincingly beaten the crap out of yourself in Liar Liar and Me, Myself & Irene. Does it hurt?

CARREY: I hurt myself on Me, Myself & Irene. I'd sprained my ankle during rehearsals in the scene where Renee kicks me in the mouth and sends me over the fence. So for the rest of the film, when I'm running after the car, jumping on the car and doing all this stuff—it's all with a sprained ankle. I still have scarring on my bones. I don't generally hurt myself that much, but there were a lot of bumps and bruises on that movie.

And I was in hell in that Grinch costume, too. It was like knives were stuck in my eyes.

"There is something dark and evil going on in the Republican Party that's just too frightening to get into."

PLAYBOY: Because of the thick, colored contact lenses?
CARREY: Yes. It was just the worst situation comfort-wise you could possibly imagine. But still, when they said "Action!" I was free, you know? There's something about that suspended life moment. When they say "Action!" I'm free.
PLAYBOY: You grew up loving Jimmy Stewart and played a role he would have taken in The Majestic. It didn't do well.
CARREY: It was a beautiful movie. I think what it missed was some humor. If you're going to do a hats-off to Frank Capra you've got to have the part when the gymnasium floor opens up and everybody falls in the pool and he's stepping on her robe and she's naked, jumping behind a bush. This film took itself a little too seriously. Too sentimental. It's odd when people go, "Well, how do you feel that this failed?" I never see it as failure. How can it be? This was 500 people working for four months. We turned on a town and gave them significance. I learned to be a better actor and met Martin Landau. Andy Kaufman? A frigging triumph! I don't think it was meant to do a lot of business, because Andy didn't do a lot of business. We were true to him and polarized the same people.
PLAYBOY: What about The Cable Guy?
CARREY: Huge success! It has become this weird cult movie. So much focus was put on the money I made, and people came gunning for it. It's not Shakespeare, but there's some funny shit in that movie, man. It was dark. The mistake the movie company made was to tell people it wasn't dark. The audience got surprised. It's a dark, psychological, in-your-face comedy. I felt I'd done something fairly brave and that we had huge laughs doing it.
PLAYBOY: You aren't big on sequels. Did it bother you when New Line cast a look-alike for Dumb and Dumberer, a widely panned Dumb and Dumber prequel?
CARREY: Yes, it did. It was an odd kind of compliment and an odd, creepy thing to do, to dress somebody up and try to pass him off as me. That shouldn't happen until you're dead, right? I felt for that guy. He did a good impression.
PLAYBOY: Would you coax your 16-year-old daughter to go into show business?
CARREY: No one coaxed would ever fucking make it. If she has a burning desire beyond belief to make it in this business, she'll do it. No one can make it otherwise. No way. There are too many fucking humiliating things. She's going to be accused of nepotism. But she has talent, and that will prove her or not prove her. She's really a smart girl with a beautiful voice. She'll make it if she commits.
PLAYBOY: Having been forced to leave school for financial reasons, are you a stickler about her getting a degree?
CARREY: I want her to. I feel there's some kind of solace that comes with finishing things. I don't think about it so much anymore. I left halfway through 10th grade, but I read and I have a hunger for information and knowledge. Psychology has always fascinated me. One reason I love acting is that you always have to figure out where a character came from, what his parents did to him, what happened here. It's like being a psychologist of some sort.
PLAYBOY: You've been married twice; now you live alone. Do you miss having somebody around?
CARREY: It's less about that than about wanting to be real with somebody. I want to love somebody without walking around in a secret turmoil and feeling like I've been made to be something I'm not. Somebody I can be nakedly honest with—that's who is going to win my love.
PLAYBOY: Given your current level of fame, how do you date a woman and know if she's responding to you and not to your stardom?
CARREY: Sooner or later the monster shows its face.
PLAYBOY: How do you know?
CARREY: I think we're all innately psychic. We're like dogs, man. We smell it. Sometimes we deny it, but we know it. We know when somebody loves us because they love us. I'm pretty sharp.
PLAYBOY: Do you still go into relationships with an open mind, or are you cynical?
CARREY: The scariest thing for me is to change my mind and possibly hurt somebody. I don't think about being hurt as much as I think about possibly waking up one day and wanting something else and hurting that person. That's the fear, I guess. I want to have a lifelong love; I just don't know if that's real anymore.
PLAYBOY: Maybe you'd be a better husband now because you are less needy.
CARREY: I wasn't needy. I was perhaps not as tolerant as I could be. Perhaps I just picked people who were not good candidates to begin with, who weren't necessarily a good match.
PLAYBOY: Given your spirituality and your desire for dramatic roles, are you still a comic at heart?
CARREY: It is difficult because I've trained myself to be this comedic mind. That entails looking at something and deciding what's funny about it. What's funny about anything is what's wrong with it. So you're judging what's wrong with something or someone all the time, every day of your life. Down the line, that's got to take a toll. You can't end up being a happy guy if you spend every minute of your life going, "President Bush—what a fucker!" You may think that from time to time—and I certainly do—but I also don't believe that he necessarily thinks he's doing something wrong. Some people can look at life and go, "That's the beautiful thing, that's the beautiful thing. Hey, there's a beautiful thing." And that's where I'm trying to put myself.

Unstopable
Monique Lester

Model **@freya_1138**

Photographer **Farrah Williams | @elegancebyfaroutphotography**

Happy to have you on Playboy. Any exciting projects lined up this year? I'm honestly so honored to be part of such an iconic magazine; it's been a favorite of mine for so long. This year is all about stepping into new modelling opportunities, meeting new people, and continuing to grow my brand. I'm really excited to keep learning, evolving, and creating even more special content along the way.

What part of your journey are you most proud of right now? I'm honestly so proud of how far I've come, especially knowing I built this for myself. When I look back at where I started just two years ago, everything I've achieved through collaborations, growth, and persistence feels so meaningful. I'm proud of every step of the journey, but being on my second Playboy cover is definitely a standout moment. It's huge for me and something I'll always be grateful for.

How would you describe your lifestyle in three words right now? Loving, unforgettable, and beautifully unpredictable. Loving, because I truly appreciate what matters most: family, the life I've created, and the love that surrounds me. Even if it's from just a small, meaningful circle, that's all I need. Unforgettable, because these moments are precious, and in the end, memories are what we carry with us. And beautifully unpredictable, because life brings both sickness and health, the good and the bad, and I choose to embrace it all.

What's a lesson you've learned that changed the way you see yourself? I don't think there's just one single lesson; we're all constantly learning and evolving. But one thing that's really changed how I see myself and my life is understanding how quickly everything can change, for better or worse. It's taught me not to take anything for granted, to cherish every moment, and to value my health above everything else. Because in the end, health really is more than wealth.

Is there a skill or hobby you've recently picked up or want to learn soon? I've thought about picking up more gardening and handyman skills at some point, but right now I'm focused on juggling life as a mother, partner, model, and my work in disability care. I might also be heading back into real estate soon, so there's plenty keeping me busy, but I'd love to explore those skills when the timing feels right.

Are there any habits you want to leave behind as you step into a new chapter? As I step into this new chapter, I'm leaving behind unhealthy habits like alcohol, smoking, and negative energy. I want to stay true to my gut, trust my instincts, and not let anything or anyone bring me down. Learning to always trust your first instincts has been a game-changer for me.

What's one lifestyle change you made this year that completely transformed you? This year, I made a big lifestyle change by stepping away from a toxic cycle of vaping and drinking, which I'd been using to cope with stress. It had become an unhealthy habit, and stopping it has completely transformed me. I feel healthier, stronger, and more in control of my life than ever.

What's one lesson from your journey that you wish you'd learned earlier? One lesson I wish I'd learned earlier is to always be firm about what I want when it comes to modelling opportunities. Never compromise or do something out of desperation; knowing your worth and standing by it makes all the difference. If something is meant to be, it will be.

Your ideal first date: My ideal first date? A classic dinner and a movie, something simple, relaxed, and fun that gives us a chance to connect, laugh, and enjoy each other's company.

Guilty pleasure: My guilty pleasure? Having a drink, playing Heroes of the Storm, and sneaking chocolate and ice cream in bed while watching a good movie or series. It's my little way to relax, indulge, and just enjoy life.

What makes you the ultimate partner to have? I'm fiercely loyal and love with my whole heart. When I'm with someone, I'm all in, emotionally, mentally, and wholeheartedly. I'm the kind of woman who stands by her partner through everything, celebrating the highs, supporting through the lows, and keeping the spark alive no matter what. A true ride-or-die, I'm here for the long haul, bringing love, passion, and unwavering devotion every step of the way.

When people look back at this moment in your career, what do you hope it represents about who you are? I hope it shows that I am strong, fierce, and determined, someone who goes after her dreams with everything she's got. That no matter the challenges, I'm capable of creating the life I've always imagined and inspiring others to do the same.

What's one goal you didn't hit last year that you're determined to achieve this time? I have some personal body goals I'm working on this year, focusing on feeling my best and finding peace with my body, especially after having two kids. I believe in always striving to better yourself, in any way that matters to you. I'm also preparing for a mini BBL and some targeted sculpting, so I can enhance my curves and feel even more confident in my own skin.

What new doors or opportunities are you hoping to explore in your career? I'm really excited about the idea of taking my modelling career overseas and exploring new international opportunities. It's a bit challenging with two kids, limited family support, and my partner being FIFO, plus the costs involved, but I'm determined to make it happen. I want to keep growing, learning, and seeing just how far I can take my career.

What advice would you give to someone learning to step into their confidence? Always keep learning and be proactive; opportunities rarely just come to you, so reach out and go after them. Put in the hard work, be confident, and love what you do. Don't worry about what others think, focus on improving yourself, and most importantly, enjoy the journey.

Where can our readers catch up with you and stay updated with your work? My Instagram is where I share most of my latest content; you can find me at @freya_1138. I also have some special links and extra content available through my link in bio, so it's the best place to stay updated on everything I'm creating.

LOVE

XOXO

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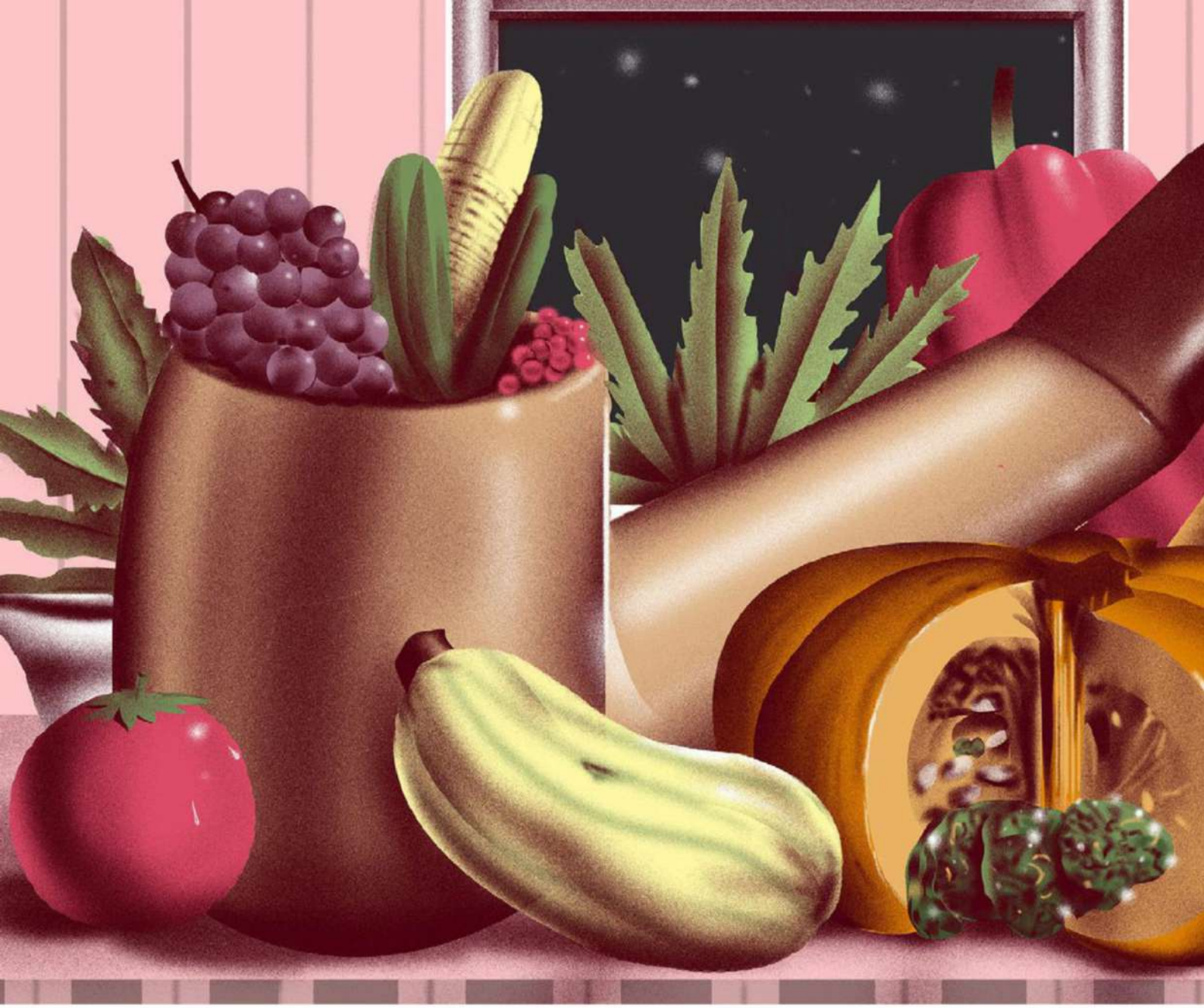
XOXO
LOVE



The DOPE TUTOR ANSWERS

Why Does Weed Make Food Taste So Good?

BY **ANDREW DEANGELO** ILLUSTRATION BY **RICHARD A. CHANCE**

My first food-and-weed epiphany was a quasi-religious experience—one that happened more than three decades ago. I was in high school and had smoked a joint on the walk over to my best friend's house, arriving quite stoned. In the grip of the munchies, I asked him if there was anything I could eat. He told me to help myself to the pots of Ethiopian food upstairs in the kitchen.

Aromas washed over me like a tidal wave as I entered the kitchen—berbere, garlic, ginger, chili. The array of fragrant spices flooding my senses made me want all of whatever was creating the wonderful smells. A bit of drool slid from the corner of my mouth, which I found hilarious. I began to laugh as I tried to figure out where the plates and utensils were kept in this unfamiliar kitchen. This was no easy task as each drawer yielded the wrong results. To me this was hysterical. Tears streamed down my face from laughing so hard. Somehow I managed to find the proper gear and opened the first lid on the stove. As I peered into a pot of chicken legs and a whole egg drowning in a curry-like sauce, I smelled the food in a way I never had before. The scent lingered in my nostrils; I lingered above the pots. I must've stood there for 10 minutes smelling the food and laughing out loud.

THC-heightened senses can make the munchies a true pleasure to remember

Then it was time to eat.

I decided to take my time and really enjoy it. The memory of that first bite is seared into my mind. I could taste each flavor, each spice. I noticed the texture in my mouth, the heat, the chili burning my tongue, the chicken falling off the bone. It tasted so good, like the best thing I had ever eaten. I began to wonder if my mother had ever cooked anything so spectacular. It was a moment of pure pleasure.

My friend came upstairs as I was eating. Whoever made this food needed to open a restaurant right away, I told him. That's when he noticed my bloodshot eyes and busted me for being high as a kite. After a long laugh, he then schooled me on the proper way to eat this cuisine, showing me how to use the spongy injera bread and my fingers to scoop up everything. We sat in silence and ate, and I swear I thought I saw Jesus. I think I even stood up when I was done, applauding and saying "Bravo!" My friend made sure to usher my stoned ass out of his house before his parents came home. On my walk back, I noticed my senses were still heightened; I could still smell and taste the delicious flavors and spices.

That meal left a deep impression—37 years later, it's clear as a bell. And they say stoners can't remember anything. On the contrary, science says it's perfectly normal for me to remember that THC-enhanced meal with such clarity.

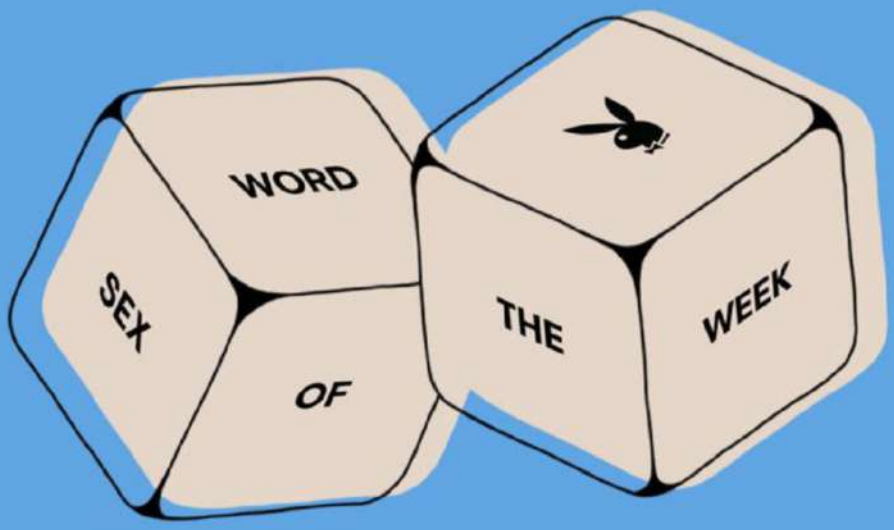
When cannabis hits your brain, a lot happens to your appetite. Two recent studies conducted with mice, one in the United States and the other in Europe, tell us a lot. The European study reveals that the olfactory area of the brain becomes more active when THC is in your system. This explains why the smell of the food captured my attention all those years ago. In fact, when I tap into that memory, I can still "smell" those scents wafting off the stovetop. It's because the weed made that area of my brain more sensitive—and smell, in general, stimulates appetite. When smell is enhanced, so is appetite, and so is the memory of smell and taste. That's why you can remember great meals over the years, even without any assistance from cannabis.

WHEN CANNABIS HITS YOUR BRAIN, A LOT HAPPENS TO YOUR APPETITE.

The American study reveals two opposing things that happen in a different part of the brain called the hypothalamus, which tells you when you're full and need to stop eating, among other things. THC appears to turn this function down or off, and also causes the release of dopamine, which can make you feel hungry. That's why the munchies can strike even after you've indulged in a big dinner. Hours after the main meal, you may find yourself getting that third plate of turkey this Thanksgiving.

This year, as we forgo large gatherings and set more intimate tables, let's spark up some cannabis together and blow some smoke at the Zoom screen. You may find yourself slowing down, taking time to smell your meal, marveling at all the different tastes you can experience simultaneously—and maybe laughing out loud until tears of joy stream down your face. What better way to settle into the holidays?

Tune in next month for more about cannabis, pleasure and why weed can be the best gift of all.



Humiliatrix

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

ILLUSTRATION BY
KATIE BAILIE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

humiliatrix (*n*) a type of dominatrix who is skilled in erotic humiliation or real-life humiliation

Erica opened her messages to find a video of her sub scrubbing the floor of his bathroom completely naked save for a chastity belt and platform heels—another day in the life of a humiliatrix.

If you've been keeping up with Playboy, you likely know the ins and outs of being a dominatrix. Now it's time to delve even deeper into the world of erotic humiliation. If a man gets off to the idea of being laughed at and insulted, especially in a sexual manner—penis shaming comes to mind—then they may be the perfect candidate for a humiliatrix.

Being a humiliatrix is simple enough. The tasks may range from demanding embarrassing nude videos to calling someone a "useless, baby-dicked piece of garbage" to completely ignoring your sub for weeks as they beg for acknowledgement. Like any dominatrix, humiliatrixes accept nothing but utter obedience and unrelenting servility from their bottoms. Unlike professional dommes, however, a humiliatrix doesn't always require a physical space with their clients. All they need is an internet connection to rain down verbal abuse and psychological stress on the sub. Humiliation play is the perfect BDSM kink for our social-distance era.

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